

THE
HISTORY
OF
FRANCE,

UNDER THE KINGS OF
THE RACE OF VALOIS,
FROM
THE ACCESSION OF CHARLES THE FIFTH,
IN 1364,
TO THE DEATH OF CHARLES THE NINTH,
IN 1574.

THE SECOND EDITION,
WITH VERY CONSIDERABLE AUGMENTATIONS.

BY
NATH^L WILLIAM WRAXALL, Esq.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

AS it may be necessary to account to the Public for the change in the Title of this Work in the present Edition, the Author ventures to rest the propriety of that alteration upon the following grounds, leaving to the Public the decision on their validity and importance. The dates of every memorable transaction, as well as the regular series of years, are introduced into this Work, which were totally omitted in the "*Memoirs of the Kings of France of the Race of Valois.*" Considerable Additions and Augmentations are made in various places, to the Text; but what renders it much more voluminous, is, the number of Notes which are introduced, particularly under the four last Reigns; when the Historical Lights attainable upon all the principal events, were much more ample, than could be derived from the paucity of Authors in the preceding times. Under Charles the IXth, a great proportion of the Work is new, and some discoveries, elucidatory of that melancholy period of the

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French Annals, may perhaps be found. The Author is conscious, that he owes it to himself, though not to the Public, to compleat the History of France to the extinction of the family of Valois, in the person of Henry the III^d, brother and successor of Charles the Ninth. The present Work ends in 1574. That event took place only about fifteen years afterwards, in 1589.

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THE history of France may be considered as abounding more than any other, in those interesting scenes which touch the heart.

The annals of England are bolder, and marked with stronger colours; but, like the genius of the nation, they are austere and gloomy. Few of those pleasing and elegant anecdotes occur, which soften the horror of battles, and open the gentler sources of entertainment. The long wars and alternate massacres of the two houses of York and Lancaster, were followed by the capricious tyranny of the family of Tudor. Even Elizabeth's reign, justly renowned for policy and wisdom, is not comparable for refinement and cultivation of manners, to the court of Catherine of Medecis. The efforts of a passion for liberty, however noble and justifiable in themselves, mingled with the frenzy of fanaticism, im-

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peded the entrance of those humanizing arts which polish society, during the greater part of the seventeenth century; and Charles the second, educated in foreign countries, and habituated to more courtly climes, first introduced that spirit of urbanity and gallantry into his dominions, which was previously unknown, or at least only faintly characterised the nation.

The French history on the contrary, is replete with those anecdotes and situations which bring the sovereign immediately to our view, and even divest him of that splendour or dignity, which usually veil him from observation. The little weaknesses of the heart, the trespasses of passion, how infinitely do they engage!—We contemplate ourselves, we pity, and we forgive. Why are Francis the first, and Henry the fourth, so peculiarly objects of the attachment of every feeling reader? Because they were distinguished by those amiable and engaging foibles which serve to contrast the virtues of the warrior and the king, which nature has almost constantly and inseparably implanted in animated and exalted bosoms. We like to quit the council-board, or the field of carnage and desolation, to follow the *man*, and behold him in the retirement of private life.

From this principle it is, that Memoirs, though less noble and august than History, are yet generally more true to nature, and interest us in a

livelier degree. Confined to a narrower sphere, but diffuse and minute, they satisfy the restless curiosity of the mind to know those comparatively trivial and unimportant transactions of the individual, which History usually disdains to enumerate, and passes over in silence.

In these sources of information, the French annals are as profuse, as ours seem to have been barren and deficient. The anecdotes and intrigues of the court of Francis the first, are perhaps better known over all Europe, than are those of James the first of England, although in point of time they were anterior by near a century.

There is, however, a point, beyond which a liberal but corrected curiosity does not carry its researches. The events of the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries are wrapped in too gross a barbarism, and obscured by too profound an ignorance, to merit the pains or repay the trouble of an elaborate enquiry. Scarce any materials are to be procured; scarce any of the great actuating motives which then influenced the princes or people, exist in any shape at present; scarce any deductions are applicable to these times, from the conduct or policy of those. As knowledge and letters broke in upon this darkness, every thing rises in its effect upon the mind, and becomes of importance. The objects swell to the view, and are more intimately discernable.—There is, perhaps, no exact and
precise

precise æra at which to date this alteration. It cannot however be extended higher in the French annals, than to the accession of Philip of Valois; and to bring it down to that of Charles the seventh, might be too severe.—We may begin with the reign of Charles the fifth.

To give an accurate picture of kings or governments, to throw many new lights on history, or to enter into an exact chronological narration of facts, is not the professed object of this work. The intention is, to place before the reader those striking qualities of the successive princes, which bring them forward to the eye, and characterize the manners of the age in which they flourished; to make him acquainted with the chief ministers, or mistresses, or generals, who acted the second parts under them; and to indulge the fullest liberty of reflection, censure, or admiration, uninfluenced by prescription, prejudice, or country.

If we survey the situation of France at the period when this History commences, it presents a scene of desolation, and almost of anarchy. The pretensions of Edward the third of England to that crown, had involved the kingdom in blood and ruin. If he did not attain the complete gratification of his ambition, his thirst of glory at least was satiated by the captivity of John, the father of Charles the fifth;

1364.

April.

1364. and the peace of Bretigny had restored to him all those provinces which his ancestors had possessed in Guyenne and Gascony. His son, the Black Prince, yet dreadful from the fields of Crécy and of Poitiers, held his Court in these dominions. He was still in the prime of manhood, and his character, adorned with all the shining qualities of a warrior and a sovereign, spread terror to the remotest limits of the French monarchy.

Charles, surnamed the Bad, king of Navarre, had already been active in all the commotions of the preceding reign; he had pretensions to the crown of France in right of his mother Jane, daughter of Louis the tenth, and his turbulent and discontented spirit induced him to form alliances of the closest nature with the English. Nature had endowed him with all those talents and qualifications, which, under the guidance of a vicious heart, are eminently pernicious. He captivated the multitude by his munificence and generosity. Versed in all the arts of address, and even of eloquence to varnish over his crimes, he had boldness enough to perpetrate the most atrocious. He was an avow'd and inveterate enemy to Charles the fifth, to whom it is pretended that he had administer'd poison when Dauphin; and the effects of which, though retarded, yet eventually terminated in his death some years afterwards. Fickle and perfidious, he violated even his interests to gratify his passions, and trampled on the
the

the laws of consanguinity, of patriotism, and of honour. 1364.

Bands of desperate soldiery, to whom the late wars had given birth, and whom the peace had render'd unnecessary, over-ran the provinces, and added to the general confusion. The lands lay desert and uncultivated; a plague had swept away prodigious numbers of the people; and the taxes, which the ransom of the late king and the disorders of the state had encreased to an unprecedented degree, tended to produce a spirit of revolt and disaffection among them.

Charles, the eldest son of John, had only attained his twenty-sixth year when he ascended the throne; but he had been educated in adversity, the school of great princes. Instructed by the fatal experience of his father and grandfather, he studiously avoided those errors into which their presumption and rashness had led them.

A succession of victories and conquest had raised the courage of the English nation, and depressed the genius of France. Two able and powerful princes commanded the English, both in the vigour of their age. Though the storm had spent its force, it was not yet subsided, nor did any apparent decline in their affairs mark the moment when they might be attacked with success. Charles knew how to adopt that wary and temporising policy, which peculiarly distinguishes

1364. guishes statesmen born to retrieve the affairs of empires, and which almost always finally attains its ends. It is not fortune, but wisdom, that disposes of the events of human life.

1367 and 68. A circumstance which at first seemed to carry the English glory to the greatest heighth, open'd to Charles the occasion he so much desir'd, and enabled him from the recesses of the Louvre to regain without a battle all that both his predecessors had lost, Pedro, surnam'd the Cruel and the Wicked, reign'd in Castile. He had put his queen to death by poison, though young, beautiful, and virtuous, to gratify a mistress to whom he was enslav'd *. He had murder'd one of his brothers, and attempted the lives of the others. Henry de Trastemare, the eldest of these, weary of the tyrant's excesses, and push'd by despair, fled into France, Charles the fifth receiv'd

* Pedro the Cruel was marry'd to Blanch, daughter of the duke of Bourbon. Previous to the completion of the nuptials, the king became enamour'd of Mary de Padilla, whom he first saw by accident at the house of Don Alfonso d'Albuquerque, prime minister of Castile, under whose wife, Mary de Padilla had been educated. So violent was the passion which Pedro conceiv'd for her, that it was with the utmost difficulty, and in compliance with the urgent importunities of the queen his mother, that he could be prevailed on to espouse the princess Blanch. The ceremony on that occasion was perform'd with an indecent haste, and in a gloomy silence which seem'd but too prophetic of the unhappy

receiv'd him with open arms, lent him a general and troops, with which he return'd into Spain, and by whose assistance he dethron'd his rival.

1367
and 68.

Pedro, detested and odious even to foreigners, endeavoured in vain to find an asylum in Portugal; and after wandering some time in Galicia, he embark'd for Bourdeaux, to implore the protection and assistance of the prince of Wales, who resided in that city, as capital of Guyenne. Fond of military fame, and flatter'd by the title of restorer or dethroner of kings, in an evil hour the prince consented. He marched across the Pyrenees, and met Henry de Trastemare in the plains of Navarette. Victory, which still waited on him, declared in his favour. He replaced Pedro on the throne, and was repaid with that ingratitude which he ought to have expected. Scarce could he carry back to France the half of his troops, thinned by distempers,

unhappy catastrophe that follow'd.—Pedro exerted the utmost effort of restraint on his inclinations, in remaining two days with his new queen. On the third he quitted her, and return'd to his mistress. She redoubled her caresses to retain her lover, and succeeded. She even engaged him to compel his wife to leave the kingdom, and return into France. But Pedro, to whom crimes were familiar, caus'd her to be poison'd. This infamous deed was committed in 1361, when Blanch was scarce 25 years old. Mary de Padilla surviv'd her only a short time.

1367 distempers, unrecompensed, and discontented.
 and 68. He himself could not escape the attacks of a
 disease, which, though not immediately mortal,
 incapacitated him for those feats of arms, and
 that exertion of personal prowess, which had
 render'd him so eminent and renowned.

1369 Bertrand du Guesclin, the second captain only
 and 70. of his age while the Black Prince could bear
 the weight of armour; who had been twice his
 prisoner, and whom Edward had set free from a
 magnanimous contempt of his capacity, now
 came forward. Charles put into his hand the
 constable's sword, and order'd him to unsheath
 it against the enemies of France. In vain did
 the conqueror of Poitiers attempt to support the
 great name which he had acquired in war. In
 vain, with an indignant pride, did he threaten
 to appear with sixty thousand men, and a hel-
 met on his head, before his sovereign lord the
 king of France, who summoned him as vassal.
 Debilitated, feeble, and depress'd by the ad-
 vances of disease, he made only some inef-
 fectual efforts to stem the torrent of adverse
 fortune. His death follow'd not many years
 after; and the minority which took place under
 his son, Richard the second, who succeeded to
 the English crown, left Charles and du Guesclin
 an almost undisputed conquest.

July,
 1376. In a few years all the fruits of the victories
 of Edward the third were lost; and of the vast
 dominions

CHARLES THE FIFTH.

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dominions which he had acquired, only Calais, Bourdeaux, and Bayonne, with an inconsiderable territory, remained to his successor. France had recover'd her natural and ancient ascendant, while a wise and vigorous administration succeeding to the past convulsions, produced effects the most beneficial. Order and tranquillity began to resume their seat in the provinces from which they had so long been banished, and the house of Valois no longer held a precarious throne; when Charles the fifth expir'd in the prime of his age. Historians attribute his death to the effects of that poison which the king of Navarre had administered to him many years before, and the consequences of which a German physician had delay'd in some degree by an issue in his arm, which he at the same time predicted must be attended by death if ever it was clos'd. Whether this story does not carry with it a certain air of the marvellous, or whether poisons can be thus delayed and mitigated, may perhaps appear doubtful *. Whatever was the

1376

to

1380.

1380.

* All the cotemporary writers agree in the assertion, that the King of Navarre administer'd poison to the Dauphin; and that it was so violent as to cause his hair, nails, and the external skin to come off. The emperor Charles the fourth sent him a physician, who in some degree suspended the progress, and diminish'd the mortal tendency of the venom, by opening an issue in his arm. About a fortnight before his death, the King caus'd himself to be remov'd to the

1380: the cause, the effect was ruinous and destructive to the kingdom. With the king expired the guardian genius of the monarchy; and France, rescued by his wisdom, relapsed into all the miseries she had previously experienced.

It is unnecessary to draw the character of Charles the fifth: it is seen in the epitome of his

the Chateau de Beauté upon the Marne, in hopes of deriving benefit from the change of air. The symptoms of his disorder becoming more inveterate, he prepar'd himself for his end with the utmost magnanimity and composure. He was in his forty-fourth year when he expired. Christina de Pisan, daughter to Thomas de Pisan, assures us with the greatest solemnity, that the king died exactly at the hour, which her father, who was astrologer to that prince, had predicted. The belief in magic was a characteristic of the century, and subsisted, though somewhat diminished in its influence, for ages afterwards. Voltaire, accustomed to treat all superstitions with contempt, and none more so than those which have been supposed to attend or produce the deaths of princes, denies that Charles's end was caused or accelerated by poison.—“The poison,” says he, “of which Charles the fifth died, was a bad constitution.” Charles the Bad himself surviv'd the king of France about seven years, and perish'd by a death equally singular and deplorable, in a very advanced age.—He was attack'd with the leprosy, a disease in that century common through all Europe. His physicians had ordered him to be wrapped in bandages of linen previously steeped in brandy and sulphur. A spark of fire accidentally falling on him, he was so miserably burnt before his attendants could extinguish it, that he expir'd at Pampelona, the capital of Navarre, only three days after.

CHARLES THE FIFTH.

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his reign. His sagacity, his masterly and temper'd policy were superiour to all the brilliancy of military glory. He foresaw the evils which must inevitably befall the state from the situation of affairs; but he foresaw without being able to redress them. He had intended to vest the regency in the queen, one of the most accomplished and virtuous princesses of her time; but her death deprived the kingdom of this resource *; and Bertrand du Guesclin, from whose
valour

1380.

* Jane, queen of Charles the fifth, was daughter to Peter the first, duke of Bourbon. She was born in 1337, and married to the prince in 1350, neither of them having compleated their thirteenth year. She was beautiful in her person, and possessed of talents which rendered her worthy the throne of France. The king her husband was passionately attached to her: he consulted her on affairs of state, and frequently carried her to the parliament on days of solemnity, where she took her seat publicly by his side. She appeared there in May 1369, when Charles declared war on Edward the third of England, for his pretended infractions of the treaty of Bretigny. Though the king had three brothers in the vigour of their age, yet he had, by his will, delegated the regency to her, in case of her surviving him. The queen died in childbed at the hotel de St. Paul in Paris, in February 1378. Froissart says, that her health and constitution were deeply injured during her pregnancy, by her persisting to bathe, contrary to the advice and remonstrances of her physicians, which was very prejudicial to her; "et la," says Froissart, "lui commença le mal de la mort." Her death appears to have been a real misfortune to France, under the circumstances in which it took place.

1380. valour and conduct the state might have drawn
 ——— infinite advantages, was now no more. Perhaps
 no event was ever more fatal to France than the
 death of Charles, nor can it be doubted, that
 if he had liv'd a few years longer, he would
 have obtain'd the most complete superiority
 over the English, whom the errors and miscon-
 duct of Richard the second had involved in all
 the confusion of civil discord *.

Sept. Charles the sixth, who succeeded to the throne,
 1380. was only twelve years of age; and as it was
 therefore necessary to appoint a regent during
 his

* The uniform and systematical conduct of Charles the
 sixth as a politician and a sovereign, in a ferocious age,
 when war and battles decided the fate of nations, impress
 us with the most elevated ideas of his capacity and grandeur
 of mind. These extraordinary endowments procured him
 the epithet of "The Wise;"—a title to which his whole
 reign evinces his just pretensions. Petrarch, who visited
 France in the time of his father John, was equally astonish'd
 and delighted at the indications he then gave of a judgment
 above his years, and capable already of directing the greatest
 affairs of state. Edward the third himself, his antagonist,
 made the eulogium of Charles, when he declared, "that no
 prince of his age had so seldom drawn his sword; yet that
 none had ever given him so much disturbance." The
 whole series of his policy was directly oppos'd to that of his
 predecessors, John and Philip of Valois, whose impetuous
 and ill-govern'd violence had precipitated their kingdom
 and subjects into the most deplorable calamities.

his minority, the late king, conscious that his brother the duke of Anjou, second son of John, had the justest claim from proximity of blood, nominated him to that charge previous to his death. His first care was to assume the power; but as the person of the prince and the care of his education were consigned to other hands, these divided and jarring interests soon broke out into open animosity. The regent seems to have been marked by no other qualities than an unbounded rapacity, and an inordinate ambition; vices too common to persons of exalted stations, to form any great discrimination of character.

The duke of Berri, second brother to Charles the fifth, was a prince of mean abilities, and whom the superior talents of his competitors in administration ever retained in a sort of subordination and inferiority.

Philip, duke of Burgundy, the last and youngest of the sons of John, was already celebrated from his valour, and powerful from his dominions. The favourite of his father, by whose side he was taken prisoner at the battle of Poitiers, when his other sons deserted him, John had distinguished his courage and attachment by the investiture of Burgundy, the greatest fief dependant on the crown. In this sacrifice to affection, he violated the rules of sound policy, and laid the foundation of numerous ills, which his descendants

1380. descendants had cause to regret. Superadded to a dukedom in possession, Philip had a vast territory in expectation by his marriage with Margaret, daughter and heiress of Albert of Bavaria, count of Haynault and Holland; and as he was eminent for intrepidity, and not deficient in capacity, he formed an insuperable barrier to the power which the regent claim'd, and attempted to exercise. The authority of this latter was however of short duration, and that thirst of dominion which characterised him, was the immediate cause of his ignominy and death.

The dissolute and voluptuous Joan, who was descended from Charles of Anjou brother of St. Louis, and so distinguished for her talents, her crimes, and her misfortunes, reign'd at this time in Naples. Charles de Durazzo, her relation whom she had adopted as her successor, and whom she had bound by every obligation to be grateful to her, by an act of the basest inhumanity depos'd and murder'd his benefactress.

1382. Previous to her death, the unfortunate queen called to her assistance the duke of Anjou, and declared him heir and successor to the throne.

Inflam'd with desire to take possession of the diadem devolved to him, the regent redoubled his exactions on the people, seized on all the treasures which the late king had concealed within the walls of the castle of Melun; and

CHARLES THE SIXTH.

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encouraged by the Antipope, from whom he received the crown at Avignon, marched his troops into Italy, consisting of thirty thousand cavalry; but the Neapolitan prince, too wise to hazard a battle, and skilled in all the duplicity of Italian negotiation, deluded his rival by challenges which he never meant to fulfil, and protracted the execution of them till famine and disease began to waste his forces. Surrounded, harrafs'd and continually pursued by a superior army, the duke of Anjou was at length reduc'd to extream distress, from which no efforts were made by his brothers to relieve or extricate him. Dejected with such a series of calamities, and forgotten in France, he at length sunk under the weight of his misfortunes, and died at Bari in Calabria of a malignant distemper, in the greatest poverty, and almost abandon'd.

1382.

1384.

If we turn our view to France, we find all the disorders and oppressions which usually accompany minorities.—The dukes of Berri and Burgundy, grasping at power, and exercising it to the injury of the state, gave rise by their exactions to sedition and tumult. The young king Charles the sixth, whom his father had begun to train in sentiments of virtue and greatness; now neglected in his education, studiously kept from an acquaintance with the affairs of his kingdom, only taught to follow the chase, or immersed in debauchery, seemed to

1384

to

1390.

C

promise

1384

to

1390.

promise no termination to these public calamities. His heart indeed was generous and beneficent; he loved his people, and endeavour'd to give them proofs of this disposition. Even his understanding, though uncultivated, and left to unfold itself without any assistance, yet appears to have been clear, just, and manly. As he approach'd to years of maturity, the authority of his uncles gradually diminish'd; and when he first assum'd the reins of government, he conciliated the affections of his people by depriving the duke of Berri of the government of Languedoc, which he had greatly abused, and by the absolute dismissal of the duke of Burgundy.

The kingdom began to recover from the evils of a divided legislature, and to enjoy a degree of tranquillity, when an accident the most extraordinary and deplorable renew'd and aggravated the national misfortunes—I mean the king's loss of reason. The circumstances which produced it are very curious. We must go back a little, to trace them to their source.

During the extreme distress to which Louis duke of Anjou was reduc'd in his unfortunate expedition against Naples, he dispatch'd the Seigneur de Craon into France to procure from the court a supply of money; but this nobleman, after having rais'd a considerable sum, instead of carrying it to his master, dissipated it

at Venice in entertainments and courtezans. On 1391.
 Craon's return to Paris, he was accus'd by the duke
 of Berri as the author of his brother the duke of
 Anjou's calamities and death; and having after-
 wards attempted to assassinate Olivier de Clifson,
 constable of France, he was oblig'd to take shelter
 in Bretagne, where the duke of that country re-
 ceiv'd and protected him *. Charles, instigated
 by his ministers demanded the criminal, and on

* The Seigneur de Craon's resentment against Olivier de Clifson arose from the following circumstance. Craon had been in high favour with the king's brother, Louis duke of Orleans. An indiscreet expression having escap'd him to the duchess Valentina, which seem'd to insinuate that her husband was engag'd in a criminal amour, it soon reach'd the duke's ear, who immediately disgrac'd him without assigning any cause, and even prevail'd on the king to banish him from the court. Craon, having had some previous dispute with the constable, imputed the disgrace to his suggestions, and resolv'd on revenge.

Juvenal des Urins has related the particulars of the assassination. As Olivier de Clifson return'd from the hotel de St. Pol, where Charles the sixth then kept his court, Craon attack'd him with twenty soldiers. The constable defended himself against so great a disparity of numbers with the most determin'd courage; and at length, cover'd with wounds, he gain'd a tradesman's shop, at the door of which he sunk down from loss of blood. Craon, apprehending him to be dead, escap'd with his assassins from Paris, and took refuge in Bretagne.—He obtain'd the king's pardon for this atrocious crime ten years afterwards, at the interview which took place between Charles the sixth and Richard the second king of England, near Calais.

1391. the duke's refusal, prepared to seize him by force at the head of a considerable army. As he
1392. continued his march towards Bretagne through a forest between Mans and La Fleche, in the day-time, a tall man, black and hideous, came from among the trees, and seizing his horse's bridle cried out, "Arrete Roi ! ou vas tu ? Tu es trahi."——then, instantly disappear'd. The king, however, pursued his journey, in defiance of this denunciation, when a second accident, absolutely casual, produced on him effects the most violent and fatal. It was in the month of August, and the heat was insupportable. A page who carried the king's lance, having fallen asleep upon his horse, let it fall upon a helmet which another page carried before him : the noise which this caus'd, the sight of the lance, and the words of the phantom recurring all at once to the king's imagination, he believed they were going to deliver him to his enemies ; and this apprehension acting strongly on his senses, produc'd an instant fit of delirium. He drew his sword, and striking furiously at all those about him, killed and wounded several before any one had force or address enough to seize him : they effected it at length ; the king, weary'd with his efforts, fell into a sort of lethargic swoon ; and in this condition they carried him, tied down in a cart, to the city of Mans.

The story of the man in the wood appears at first sight so apparently fictitious, that we should certainly be induced to treat it as such, if, superadded to the universal testimony of the contemporary writers, some of them did not give us reason to believe, that the duke of Burgundy set on foot this engine. He was the strict ally of the duke of Bretagne; had strongly opposed the king's march, and was become useless, and depriv'd of power. Charles was only just recovered from a fever at Amiens, in which he had given some symptoms of a disorder'd understanding, which the phantom and fright were extremely calculated, in that superstitious and barbarous age, to heighten into frenzy.

The unhappy prince recover'd his senses again on the third day, but not that clearness of perception and understanding which he had previously possessed; and the expedition being render'd abortive by his loss of reason, he was conducted back to Paris by his uncles*.

The

* The account given of this extraordinary story by the author of the "Anonymous History of Charles the Sixth," who was in the army at the time, and a spectator of the accident, is too curious entirely to omit; especially as it differs in some particulars from that of the other French historians, and may be regarded as highly authentic.—

"The king," says he, "during four days previous to this attack of frenzy, had betray'd evident marks of distraction in his gesture and discourse. On the 5th of August he

1392.

The incapacity of the king for the management of public affairs reduc'd him once more to a state of tutelage; and the necessity of vesting the royal power in more able hands, brought forward to view on this occasion two characters which had hitherto remained in a sort of obscurity—the queen, and the duke of Orleans. The first of these, Isabella of Bavaria, was a

“ order'd the troops to be drawn up, as if with an intention to review them. He plac'd himself at their head, compleatly arm'd, and led them on to a lazaretto, at an inconsiderable distance from the city of Mans. At that moment a beggar of a very mean appearance rush'd from amongst the croud, and approaching the king, cried out,—‘ My prince, where are you going? They are about to betray you.’—He proceeds to relate the circumstance of the lance, which compleated the king's terror, and produced an instant fit of frenzy. “ Charles,” continues he, “ killed three persons besides the page who dropp'd his lance, one of whom was a gentleman of Guyenne, called the bastard of Polignac. His sword at length breaking in his hand, he was with great difficulty disarm'd and secured. The violence of the fit had so exhausted the king's strength, that he sunk down motionless and senseless. An almost insensible pulse about his heart, and some remains of warmth, were the only indications he gave of life. He recover'd on the third day, and learnt with horror the misfortune which had befallen him. He implor'd pardon and absolution for the deaths he had unknowingly occasion'd, received the sacrament, and solemnly vow'd, as an expiation of his trespass, to visit the churches of our lady of Chartres and St. Denis. These promises he religiously perform'd on his recovery.”

princess

princess of uncommon personal beauty. Fond 1392.
of pleasure, to which she sacrific'd without restraint, her thirst of power was not less insatiable : She possess'd the most captivating address, and excell'd in the arts of intrigue. Violent, implacable, vindictive, and capable of actions the most cruel and unnatural in the pursuit of her favourite objects, she involv'd the kingdom in war and tumult, violated every feeling of a parent, by disinheriting her offspring, and at length liv'd to become supremely odious and despicable, even to that party for whom she had sacrific'd every consideration of public benefit or humanity.

The duke of Orleans was the only brother of the king : he had just attain'd his twentieth year, when the madness of Charles seemed to authorize him to lay claim to the regency. If his unripe age disqualified him for so high and important a trust, his proximity of blood plac'd him by one degree nearer to the throne than his uncle and competitor, the duke of Burgundy. His character resembled in many respects that of his uncle the duke of Anjou, late regent. The same rapacity : equal or greater profusion : more impetuous passions. Amorous from complexion, and form'd by nature to succeed in gallantry, he set no bounds to, and drew no veil over his excesses. Tho' married very early to Valentina daughter of the duke of Milan, a princess of genius,
C 4 beauty

1392. beauty and accomplishments, and who was tenderly attach'd to him, he yet indulg'd himself in all the libertinism of irregular pleasures; and after his brother's loss of reason, enter'd into connections with the queen, which there is too much reason to suppose were criminal and incestuous. His ambitious views were however disappointed for the present, and the states being assembled in this critical emergency, conferred the administration of affairs on the duke of Burgundy. — Meanwhile the wretched king recover'd in some degree his health and intellects, when another accident, scarce less extraordinary than those by which he was first depriv'd of them, again produc'd a fatal relapse.

1393. During an entertainment, given in honour of the marriage of one of the queen's attendants, and in which the king danced, a groupe of masques enter'd the apartment, linked together with chains, and dressed like bears. The duke of Orleans, willing to inspect them closely, took a flambeau in his hand, and holding it too near, unhappily set fire to their dresses, which being daubed with pitch were instantly in a blaze: the room was in flames, and three of them were burnt to death. Every one anxious for their own preservation forgot the king, and he was on the point of being involv'd in this catastrophe, when the duchess of Berri, with uncommon presence of mind, wrapt him in her cloak, and

and preserv'd him from the danger.—This violent shock however threw the king into a second paroxysm of frenzy; and, as the ideas of magic and sorcery were universally received in those times, the people imputed his relapse to the effect of charms and incantations. After all the arts of medicine then known had been exhausted, recourse was had to magicians, processions, and fasts—but the malady was incurable, and accompany'd the unhappy monarch, though with intervals of reason, to the last moments of his life. 1393.

The government during the succeeding years presents a frightful picture of confusion and anarchy. The discordant interests and contending parties of the two dukes of Orleans and Burgundy, grew up into factions of the most rancorous and inveterate animosity. The people were loaded with exactions the most oppressive. Order, œconomy, national honour, and internal tranquillity had fled from France. The wise and salutary edicts of Charles the fifth were obliterated, or counteracted, and the kingdom, involv'd in every calamity, was only preserv'd from a renewal of the English invasions by similar evils in that kingdom, which as yet prevented and retarded them. 1393
to
1396.

In his intervals of recovery, Charles was carried as a pageant to ceremonies of state; he met the king of England, Richard the second, 1396
to
1399.
near

- 1396 near Calais, where they formed an ill-afforted
to alliance between Richard and Isabella, daughter
1399. to Charles, then only seven years of age, and

1401. which was never consummated. Soon after, he
was conducted to Rheims, to receive a visit from
Wenceslaus the emperor. That brutal and de-
spicable prince, whom his subjects, weary of his
excesses, at length justly deposed, amidst the
splendor of his reception, gave proofs of a sub-
jection to his appetites the most unrestrain'd
and debased. To such a pitch did he abandon
himself, that when the dukes of Berri and Bour-
bon came in the morning to conduct him to a
banquet, to which the king had previously in-
vited him, they found him senseless from intox-
ication, and utterly incapacitated for partaking
of the entertainment *.
1402. When Charles relaps'd into insanity, he was
violent and untractable : he could not bear the

* These visits of sovereign princes to each other, were common in that age. Charles the fourth, emperor of Germany, and father of Wenceslaus, made one to Charles the fifth of France at Paris, and was magnificently received.—Wenceslaus being totally incapable, from the effects of wine, of waiting on the king, was regaled by him the following day, when he exerted the greatest effort of restraint and self-denial over his appetites, in not intoxicating himself before dinner. The festivities and debaucheries of the two monarchs rekindled Charles's madness, and reduced him to the necessity of breaking up the interview, and returning to his capital.

queen

queen in his presence, and often proceeded even to strike her *. Valentina, duchess of Orleans alone was acceptable to him; and as her company always calm'd his agitations, and produc'd those effects, of which even lunatics are susceptible towards an object beloved, it afforded her enemies an opportunity to render her detestable to the people; who imputed all these symptoms and changes to magical powers, which she was supposed to have used to impair the king's health and understanding.—The administration mean

1402

to

1404.

* The picture which Jean Juvenal des Ursins, (a cotemporary writer of great credit,) has given of the king's unhappy distemper, is so simple and touching, as to excite commiseration very highly.

“ C'étoit grande pitié de la maladie du Roi, et ne connoissoit personne quelconque. Lui-même se deconnoissoit, et disoit que ce n'étoit il pas. On lui amenoit la Reine, et sembloit qu'il ne l'eut oncques vue; et n'en avoit point memoire, ne connoissance, ne d'hommes ou de femmes quelconques, excepté de la duchesse d'Orleans; car il la voyoit et regardoit très volontiers, et l'appelloit belle sœur. Et comme souvent il y a de mauvaises langues, on disoit, et publioient aucuns, qu'elle l'avoit enforcélé par le moyen de son Pere le duc de Milan, qui étoit Lombard, et que en son pays on usoit de telles choses; et l'une de plus dolentes et couroucées qui y fut, c'étoit la duchesse d'Orleans, et n'est à croire ou presumer qu'elle eut voulu faire ou penser.”

It appears by this account, with what contempt he justly treated the popular prejudices against the duchess of Orleans.

while

1402. while fluctuated between the rival factions : that
 to of Orleans obtain'd a short ascendant, during
 1404. which they exercised so severe an oppression, that
 the Burgundian party again regain'd the superiority ; when the king once more emerging from a long fit of insanity, and influenc'd by the cries of his people, depriv'd both the dukes of all authority, and vested the government in the queen and council.

1404. The two factions, confirmed by perpetual competition, were transmitted to succeeding generations. Philip duke of Burgundy died at this time in Brabant, and his son John, surnam'd " Sans Peur," succeeded to his ample territories, and vast pretensions. He possessed all that magnificence and splendour of character which so peculiarly distinguish'd the house of Burgundy, and seem'd hereditary in their line. His intrepidity and love of power were not inferiour to his munificence ; and the extreme confusion which prevailed throughout the court and kingdom, soon gave him an opportunity to renew the scenes which had been acted under his father.

1404. Charles, who had again relaps'd into the horrors of his former condition, could oppose no
 to obstacle to the oppressions or mal-administration
 1407. of those who possessed themselves of his authority. Isabella and the duke of Orleans had formed connections of the most intimate nature,
 and

and divided between them the sovereign power. 1404
 The clamours of the Parisians, scandalized at an
 union so apparently cemented by personal and 1407.
 unjustifiable motives, and driven to despair by
 the rapacity exercis'd over them, recall'd the
 duke of Burgundy, who was receiv'd into the
 capital with acclamations. He took his seat in
 the council: the queen and duke retired to Me-
 lun, and left the field to their competitor.

The duke of Burgundy did not neglect the
 occasion to strengthen and confirm his influence.
 —He betroth'd his daughter to the young Dau-
 phin Louis, and affected an attention to the un-
 happy king, whom his wife and brother had
 shamefully abandoned to want and every spe-
 cies of distress during his fits of insanity*. He
 gain'd the affections of the people by an allevia-
 tion of the imposts; and a forced reconcilia-
 tion at last took place, on which the queen return'd
 to Paris, and the two dukes embracing, heard
 mass together, and solemnly vowed on the sacra-
 ments an eternal oblivion of past animosities.

* Juvenal des Ursins draws a frightful and almost incre-
 dible picture of the miserable condition of Charles the sixth
 in his paroxysms of frenzy. The governess of the royal
 children confess'd to him in one of his lucid intervals, that
 she frequently had not wherewithal to feed or cloath them.
 —“Alas!” answer'd the king, with a sigh, “I am myself
 “no better treated.”—He held in his hand at the same time,
 a golden cup, in which he had just drank, and this he gave
 her for the supply of his childrens' necessities.

Those

J.P. 30

KINGS OF FRANCE.

1407.

November.

Those who know human nature well, will not be surpris'd to find the duke of Orleans's assassination following almost immediately after these marks of disssembled friendship. He was on his return from the hotel de St. Pol, where he had pass'd the evening with the queen, who was newly recovered from child-bed. It was night, and the duke was mounted on a mule, accompanied only by two or three servants. A Norman gentleman, stimulated by revenge for the loss of an employment of which he had been depriv'd by the duke, surrounded him with eighteen assassins in the "Rue Barbette." He cut off the duke's hand with the first blow of a battle-ax: at the second, he struck him from his mule; and with the third, he clove his scull, leaving him dead upon the ground. The whole band then made their escape, and took refuge in the duke of Burgundy's palace.

The motives which gave rise to this detestable crime are somewhat ambiguous and obscure: the French historians say they were more personal than political. The gallantries of the duke of Orleans were notorious; and it is pretended, that he had not only succeeded in an amour with the duchess of Burgundy, but had even the boldness and insolence to insult her husband, by introducing him into a cabinet hung with the portraits of those women he had enjoy'd, amongst which the duchess held a distinguish'd

tinguish'd place *. To whatever cause this 1407.
 crime be ascrib'd, the kingdom long felt its
 pernicious

* Duhaïllan assigns this amour as the cause of his murder; and Brantome confirms it as the tradition of his time. These are his words :

“ Lous duc d'Orleans, aieul de Louis douze, s'étant vanté tout haut dans un banquet ou étoit le duc Jean de Bourgogne son cousin, qu'il avoit en son cabinet les portraits des plus belles dames dont il avoit joui; par cas fortuit, un jour le duc Jean entrant dans ce cabinet, la première dame qu'il vit pourtraite, et se presenta du premier aspect devant ses yeux, ce fut sa noble dame et épouse, qu'on tenoit de ce temps très belle.”

Yet Olivier de la Marche in his Memoirs declares, that the duke of Burgundy, too credulous, hastily believ'd an information given him, that Louis duke of Orleans had plotted to assassinate him, and resolving to anticipate the blow, caus'd him to be assassinated. On the night of that catastrophe, he had pass'd part of the evening with Isabella. About seven o'clock, one of the king's valets de chambre came to inform the duke, that his majesty wish'd to see him immediately on an affair of importance: he went out, accompanied only by two gentlemen, and some footmen who carried flambeaux. The Norman gentleman's name, who headed the band, and dispatch'd him, was Raoullet Ocquetouville: he had been one of the duke's retainers; and Louis having caus'd his name to be struck out from the list of the officers of his household, Ocquetouville determin'd on vengeance. The assassins, to elude pursuit, set fire to a neighbouring house, and scattered gins or traps in the streets. The duke of Burgundy affected at first the utmost sorrow for the duke of Orleans's death; he attended his funeral, lamented, and wept over him—but when it was determin'd in council, to search the houses of all the
 princes

1407. pernicious consequences, and the author of it met with an exact retribution many years afterwards on the bridge of Montereau.

To write the history of the reign of Charles the sixth, from this æra to the battle of Azincourt, is to enumerate a series of proscriptions, massacres, and barbarities, almost unparalleled in any country or century. Marius or Sylla never exercised more unrelenting vengeance over their vanquished enemies in ancient Rome, than did the adherents of the duke of Orleans and the Burgundians, as they triumphed by turns in Paris. Two thousand citizens perished in one carnage.

The young duke of Orleans, only sixteen years old, succeeded to his father's place, and loudly demanded vengeance for his murder.

1408. Valentina of Milan, his mother, died of grief and disappointed revenge, in the flower of her age. The queen, depriv'd of her lover and her faithful partizan, retir'd from Paris, overcome with terror—while the duke of Burgundy, too powerful to be amenable to punishment, not only avow'd his crime, but even attempted to

princes and nobles to discover the murderers, he was so troubled and terrified that he took the duke of Bourbon aside, and confess'd to him that he was himself the perpetrator of the crime. The ensuing day he fled into Flanders with his assassins. These are the chief and most interesting particulars of that atrocious event.

CHARLES THE SIXTH.

33

excuse and justify it. The court, the capital, the kingdom, and the person of the sovereign, were alternately seized on by the opposite leaders. Anarchy, uproar, and all the fury of civil discord, reigned unrepressed and unrestrained.

1408
and 9.

The young Dauphin, Louis, began to appear amidst this scene of confusion; but his character, fickle, inconstant, dissolute, and grasping at unlimited power, seemed rather formed to increase, than diminish the accumulated evils of the state.

1409.

The king, as he regain'd from time to time some faint gleams of reason, was render'd subservient to every purpose of the predominant faction; and was one while the protector of the duke of Burgundy, and at another the avenger of the duke of Orleans. During the returns of his insanity, he was often indecently neglected, without a table, without money sufficient to defray his necessary expences, even almost without changes of dress. As he was likewise usually intractable, and difficult to manage at these times, a young and beautiful mistress was procur'd for him, of whom he became enamour'd, as he had been of the duchess of Orleans Valentina, and who alone had any influence or ascendancy over him*.

1409
to
1413.

Paris,

* Odette de Champdivers mistress to Charles, was daughter to a dealer in horses; she was young, lively, and beautiful.

D

The

1409

to

1413.

Paris, long oppress'd, became seditious; and as it had suffer'd so severely from the abuse of the royal power, attempted to repress it in some degree, and reduce it to narrower bounds.

Such was the deplorable condition of the kingdom, when the storm which had long menac'd, and which had been protracted by various incidents, burst at length.—Henry the fourth of England, who held his usurpation by a tenure too precarious to permit him to engage in foreign wars, was lately dead; and a young prince to whom the crown descended by a sort of hereditary right, and who was endow'd with all the qualities of a warrior and a general, saw and improv'd the opportunity. Henry the fifth revived the antiquated and ill-founded pretensions of Edward the third to the crown of

The queen herself first presented her to Charles the sixth; and he became presently enamour'd of this new mistress. Her authority over him was so great, in his fits of frenzy, that she obtain'd the name of "La Petite Reine;" under which title she is commonly known in history. The unhappy king, when seized with madness, would often persist to wear the same linen, how dirty soever; nor could any person except Odette induce him to desist from this resolution. Charles cohabited with her, and even had by her a daughter named Margaret de Valois. Charles the seventh acknowledged her as his sister, gave her a very ample portion, and married her to the Seigneur de Belleville in Poictou. Claude, the last of their descendants, was killed at the battle of Coutras, in 1587, under the reign of Henry the third.

France :

France: he landed in Normandy; and by the headstrong impatience of his enemies, renew'd at Azincourt the laurels won by his ancestors from Philip and John.* He then returned to England, carrying with him several captive princes of the blood, and the first nobility of France.

1415.

October.

Consternation and affright were superadded to all the other convulsions of state, and every calamity was heighten'd by this foreign invasion.

—At this juncture the Dauphin Louis died. He gave no presage of happier times, nor can his death be regarded as a loss to the kingdom. A dysentery, occasion'd by his irregularities, carried him off, though poison was suspected and pretended to have been the cause. His second brother, John, succeeded to his rights and title.

December.

This prince had married the duke of Burgundy's daughter, and was a zealous partizan of that faction; and as his death likewise follow'd within a year after that of the Dauphin, his eldest brother, it has been with more reason suppos'd that violent means were used for that purpose. The fable of his mother Isabella having destroy'd him by a poison'd chain of gold which she sent him, is palpably false and legendary; —but it is not equally certain, that Louis the second, duke of Anjou, and king of Sicily, son to the prince who perish'd in Calabria, was not the author of his death. Louis had married his

1416.
April.

1416. daughter to Charles duke of Touraine, the youngest of the king's sons, who afterwards ascended the throne; and it is said, that to facilitate the accession of his son-in-law, he did not scruple to remove both the elder brothers, who stood between him and the crown *.

Charles, destin'd to reinstate the monarchy, which was attack'd on every side, had been educated in sentiments of the utmost detestation for the duke of Burgundy, and of attachment to the house of Orleans. The queen his mother, who had now united her interest with the former of those princes, was therefore sent by his approbation and permission under a guard to Tours, after he had executed a singular vengeance on one of her lovers, nam'd Louis Bois-Bourdon. This unhappy favourite was high-steward of the queen's household, and on being put to the torture, confessed even more than his enemies desired or

* Mezerai seems to declare Louis the first Dauphin poison'd. "Il tomba malade," says he, "d'un flux de ventre, dont il mourut, non sans des marques apparentes de poison."—But he does not mention the perpetrators of this crime. It seems to be a fact much more universally establish'd, that John, the second Dauphin, was put to death by violent means. Whether the king of Sicily was the author of it, can by no means be ascertain'd; but his ambitious character justified the suspicion. Even the duke of Burgundy was accus'd in the sequel, but with much less reason or probability. He expir'd at the age of eighteen, at Compiègne in Picardy.

expected

expected to extort from him. He was tied up in a sack of leather, and thrown by night into the Seine, with this label annexed, “*Laissez passer la justice du roi !*”—An outrage which Isabella never pardoned, and which she afterwards severely revenged. 1416.

The queen's imprisonment was of short duration: she was rescued by the duke of Burgundy, and assum'd the regency. It is pretended that she had not less complaisance for the assassin of the duke of Orleans, than she had shewn to that duke himself; nor is there any difficulty in believing, that a princess who was ever a slave to the most impetuous passions, and whose irregularity of manners was notorious, did not hesitate to gratify her protector and deliverer by every compliance with his wishes. Her age, which was about forty-six or forty-seven years at that time, forms no objection, as she is universally allowed to have possess'd beauty the most captivating and perfect*. 1417.

Meanwhile

* The contemporary writers in general accuse the duke of Burgundy of criminal connections with the queen. He carried her off from the church, of Marmoutier near Tours, and conducted her to Chartres. Pontus Heuterus, in his life of John, expressly mentions Isabella as *one* of his mistresses. These are his words—“*Mulierosior patre multo fuit; viva enim uxore, pellices non ignobiles habuit,*
D 3 “ *quorum*

1418
and
1419.

Meanwhile Henry the fifth landing again in Normandy, reduc'd all that fertile province under his subjection, unoppos'd by any enemy. The faction of the duke of Burgundy, once more triumphant, re-enter'd the capital in all the splendor of conquest, and took a vengeance the most sanguinary on their opponents. The wretched king remain'd in their possession, and the Dauphin Charles was scarcely sav'd by the vigilance and exertion of Tannegui du Chastel. The English monarch, at the head of a victorious army, approach'd. He demanded Catherine, daughter of Charles the sixth in marriage, and the succession to the kingdom, with the immediate investiture of the regency under his father-in-law. Isabella, desperate, unnatural, destitute of every sentiment of a mother or a queen, did not hesitate to comply with these ignominious and haughty demands. She even carried the princess her daughter to the city of Troyes in Champagne, where the nuptials with Henry were to be solemnized; but the duke of Burgundy, who was sprung from the blood of France, and not yet lost to the feelings of patriotism, of duty, and of public glory, paus'd at this fatal step. He foresaw it's almost certain and irremediable consequences, and he determin'd to

“ quorum facile princeps extremis vitæ temporibus, Giac
“ fuit domina (de Giac) *ipsaque regis Caroli sexti uxor*, non
“ fatis bene audivit.”

prevent

prevent them before it was too late. An accommodation with the Dauphin might yet retrieve the falling state; Charles invited and implor'd him to it: Every principle of virtue demanded it. 1419.

An interview was agreed on at the bridge of Montereau-sur-Yonne; where a total amnesty of past crimes, assassinations, and animosities, was to take place on both sides, and a union of arms and interests to succeed.—But whether the duke dreaded the vengeance due to his cousin the duke of Orleans's death; or whether he suspected the Dauphin's sincerity, he did not arrive at the place of rendezvous till after he had been waited for, near fifteen days. It is said that his mistress the Lady of Giac, by a detestable act of treachery, persuaded him at length to venture. Every precaution was taken to provide for his safety: a barrier was erected on the bridge; he placed his guard at one end, and advancing with ten attendants, threw himself on his knees before the Dauphin. At that instant Tannegui du Chastel making the signal, leaped the barrier with some others, and giving him the first blow, he was almost immediately dispatched. Though the Dauphin was only a passive spectator of this assassination, yet it cannot be doubted that he was privy to its commission; nor does his youth, though it may palliate, exculpate him from the infamy of such a participation,

September.

1419. tion, since he continued his protection and favour to it's perpetrators*.

No action was ever more fatal to France. Isabella, loud in her complaints, and bent on the destruction of her son, call'd for immediate vengeance.—Philip, surnam'd the Good, who succeeded his father in the dukedom of Burgundy, was compell'd to espouse her cause from every principle of filial piety and just resentment. They resolved to consummate the pro-

* There is a veil of uncertainty and darkness drawn over this foul transaction. The partizans of the Dauphin pretend, that the duke of Burgundy had intended to execute as bloody and perfidious a vengeance on Charles at the bridge of Montereau, as he had done on the duke of Orleans some years before at Paris; but there is little probability in this assertion. Juvenal des Ursins expressly says, “ Que la dame de Giac, maitresse du duc, fut celle qui le determina à se trouver à cette entrevue.” If the solicitations of his mistress were requisite to induce him to go to the interview, it is not possible to suspect him of a premeditated design to assassinate the Dauphin. Tannegui du Chastel, and John Louvet president of Provence, were the duke's inveterate and mortal enemies. To delude him more completely, the castle of Montereau was delivered into his possession, but destitute either of provisions or engines of defence. The duke came down upon the bridge with ten attendants, and in the posture he was, on his knees, it was not difficult to dispatch him. Of the persons who accompanied him, only Archembaud de Foix, Seigneur de Noailles, attempted to defend his lord. He perished with him at the same moment. It seems impossible to acquit the Dauphin of a participation in this crime.

jected

jected marriage between Catherine, and the English monarch. It was solemnized at Troyes; and by the articles of that marriage, she brought the kingdom of France in dowry to her husband.

1420.

June.

By an unexampled and an astonishing concurrence of circumstances, a foreign prince was on the point of being seated on the throne of France. The Dauphin Charles, unable to resist so powerful a combination, retir'd southward, and began to fortify himself in the provinces beyond the Loire. Henry the fifth was proclaimed regent, and even took upon him to exercise the regal power, of which, from the disorder'd state of his mind, Charles the sixth was utterly incapable.

The defeat and death of his brother, the duke of Clarence, at Baugé in Anjou, only appeared to protract for a short time the destruction of the Dauphin. The English prince returning from his own kingdom, prepar'd to push him to the last extremities: he was declar'd guilty of the duke of Burgundy's murder, summon'd to appear before a tribunal instituted to enquire into the crime, and pronounc'd incapable of succeeding to the Crown.

1421.

April.

Henry himself began his march from Paris, arm'd with the united forces of France and Burgundy. The moment seem'd to approach of Charles's inevitable ruin——when, by one of those extraordinary incidents which decide the fate

1422.

1422. fate of nations, Henry, the fortunate and the
August. victorious, expir'd in the flower of his youth. As far as human foresight can determine from appearances, had he lived, or even had the succession descended to his brother John duke of Bedford, the family of Valois must have been overwhelm'd by such a multiplicity of concomitant evils, and an English prince have establish'd his authority over France.—But by his death, the kingdom had time to recover. An infant of nine months old, succeeded to the two crowns; and the Dauphin, re-ascending by slow degrees the hill of fortune, restor'd his declining affairs.

The death of Henry the fifth was extremely critical. The unhappy Charles, his father-in-law, surviv'd him only fifty - six days. He
 October. breath'd his last in the Hotel de St. Paul at Paris, attended in his dying moments by a single gentleman of the bed-chamber, a confessor, and an almoner. No funeral honours were paid him; no prince of the blood attended his obsequies; and the wretchedness which mark'd almost his whole life, attended him to the tomb where he was deposited*.

* Charles the sixth was interred at St. Denis, without any royal solemnity; and as soon as the funeral rites were performed, a herald having cried aloud to exhort those present to pray for the repose of the king's soul, added immediately afterwards, "Vive Henri de Lancastre, roi de France et d'Angleterre."

Here

Here let us pause a moment ! A reflecting and philosophical mind, which views with an equal and impartial eye the changes of human affairs, and revolutions of empires ;—which regards all those effects or appearances imputed by the multitude to supernatural and extraordinary interpositions, as regularly flowing from fixed and stated causes ;—which, comprehensive in its survey, enlarg'd in its conceptions, forms a just and solid estimate of things ;—such a spectator will find, at this remarkable æra of the French monarchy, ample field for speculation ; and will allow the justice of the observation, “ That
“ there is in all governments an ultimate point
“ of depression and of elevation, at which affairs
“ revert, and return in a contrary direction.”

1422.

CHAPTER THE SECOND.

Political condition of France.—Character of John duke of Bedford.—Accession and distresses of Charles the seventh.—Appearance of the maid of Orleans.—Character of Agnes Soreille.—Deaths of the queen dowager, and duke of Bedford.—Louis the Dauphin's treasonable practices, and flight.—Death of Agnes Soreille.—Circumstances of it.—English ultimately driven out of France.—Dauphin's disobedience, oppressions, and retreat into Burgundy.—Charles's fruitless attempts to gain possession of his person.—The king's illness.—Death.—Character.

1422.

THERE is perhaps no point of time in the history of France more interesting to an English reader, than that which terminated the last chapter. The death of Henry the fifth, which happen'd at the very moment when he prepar'd to overwhelm the Dauphin; and that of Charles the sixth, by which the crown devolv'd to his son, Charles the seventh, seem'd to be events so important and big with consequences, that a change the most sudden was to be expected from them.—But though the former of these incidents left the reduction of France incomplete, it did not absolutely prevent its future execution. In John duke

duke of Bedford, left regent of the two kingdoms, surviv'd the spirit of his brother Henry. 1422.
Even the French historians themselves represent him to us as a prince worthy of the great trust repos'd in him, and capable of all the toils of empire. He had just attain'd the prime of manhood; nor could the care of his infant nephew have been consign'd to more virtuous and able hands. Isabella, the declar'd enemy of her son, and Philip duke of Burgundy, reduc'd by a fatal necessity to turn his arms against the protector of his father's assassins, encreased and confirmed his power; while all the northern provinces, and Guyenne were already reduced under subjection.

Charles the seventh, on the other hand, retir'd into the fortresses of the Cevennes, or the mountains of Auvergne, as yet in his minority, and, attended only by some princes of the blood and a few brave adventurers, who were animated by considerations of loyalty and love to their expiring country, could make only a feeble opposition to such powerful enemies. On the news of his father's death, he was saluted king by his little band of adherents, and even crown'd at Poitiers*; but to such extreme penury was he reduc'd,

* The Dauphin Charles, says Mezerai, was at the castle d'Espailly, near Puy, in Auvergne, when he received the news of his father's death. On the first day he wore mourning:

1422. reduc'd, that all he could procure (even thro' the queen his wife sold her plate and jewels for his subsistence) scarce suffic'd to provide for the immediate wants of his dress and table; and he was driven to distresses only equalled by those which Mary of Medicis, and Henrietta queen of England underwent during their exile in the last century.

1422 During the first six years of his reign, the
to English arms were almost uniformly victorious;
1428. and though Charles gain'd over to his party the celebrated Arthur Count de Richemont, brother to the duke of Bretagne, yet this imperious chieftain, rough and ferocious in his manners, not only treated his sovereign with the most mortifying indignity, but exercised the power of Constable against his dearest favourites, whom he caused to be stabbed or drown'd even in the royal presence*.

The

ing: the ensuing one, he dressed himself in scarlet, and after having heard mass, he ordered the banner of France to be elevated in the chapel. The nobles who adhered to him, then saluted him sovereign, with loud acclamations of "Vive le roi!"

* The Constable first compell'd the king to renounce and banish Louvet, and Tannegui du Chastel, to both of whom he was most warmly attach'd. The Seigneur de Gyac, who succeeded to their place in Charles's favour and affections, he seiz'd on by force at Issoudun in Berri, while he was in bed, and after some short forms of pretended justice, caus'd him

1422
to
1428.

The little court of Charles was torn by intestine factions; and he would doubtless have been himself the victim of so many calamities, if similar or fiercer dissensions had not arisen between Philip duke of Burgundy and Humphry duke of Gloucester, on the subject of the beautiful Jacqueline Countess of Hainault, with whom the latter prince had entered into a contract of marriage which was never completed, and of whose dominions he attempted to take possession by force of arms. In vain did Bedford, animated only by motives of the most patriotic and glorious nature, implore his brother to desist from his unjust pretensions. In vain did he represent to him the interests of their common prince and nephew, Henry the sixth, and point out to him that the moment was arrived to extinguish for ever the race of Valois.—Gloucester was deaf to his entreaties or expostulations; and that precise juncture in the affairs of human life, which if neglected rarely or never returns, was irrecoverably lost. The regent, notwithstanding, tho' almost unsupported by his allies, maintained the war; he

him to be drowned.—Only a few months afterwards, he executed a similar vengeance on the Camus de Beaulieu, another gentleman obnoxious to his displeasure, and beloved by the king. The court was at Poitiers; and the Marechal de Bouffac, by order of the Count de Richemont, killed the unhappy favourite in the street, and almost under his master's eye.

found

1422 found resources in his own character, in his po-
 to pularity, his affability, his munificence, and the
 1428. clemency of his administration, which had at-
 tach'd to him even the Parisians.

The English were animated by a long train of
 successes, commanded by experienced leaders,
 and opposed to troops dispirited and sinking un-
 1429. der adverse fortune. The memorable siege of Or-
 leans was undertaken by them: Tho' the Count
 de Dunois, the famous bastard of Orleans, ex-
 erted every effort of valour and conduct against
 the besiegers, the place was vigorously pressed.
 Charles the seventh already began to meditate a
 retreat into Dauphiné, and all seemed to con-
 spire towards his destruction; when an occur-
 rence the most singular in the records of his-
 tory, turn'd the current in his favour, and re-
 stor'd him to the throne of his ancestors.—I
 mean the appearance of Joan d'Arc.—A vil-
 lage girl, either instigated by an enthusiastic ap-
 prehension of supernatural assistance, or instruct-
 ed to feign such a belief, quits her obscurity
 in Lorrain, and goes to find the king at
 Chinon, in Touraine.

However we may suppose Joan herself to
 have been persuaded of her divine mission, it
 is scarce possible to imagine that Charles and
 his courtiers accepted her offers from any other
 motive, than of that trying an extraordinary and
 desperate remedy in the present disorders of
 the

the state. The age was ignorant, credulous, 1429.
 barbarous, and superstitious to a high degree :
 The occurrence was exactly adapted to their
 apprehensions and religious terrors ; and while
 the Count de Dunois really commanded, Joan,
 unfurling the sacred standard, placed herself at
 the head of the troops chosen to succour the
 city. The experiment succeeded even beyond
 expectation. Armed, as it were, with superna-
 tural protection, she attack'd enemies already
 dismayed with fears, and obtain'd an easy con-
 quest.

Not satisfy'd with raising the siege of Orleans, May.
 and animated by the fortunate issue of her first
 essay in arms, she push'd her views to the great-
 est length. One victory prepar'd the way for
 a second ; and still advancing through provin-
 ces which had been totally in the power of the
 English, she led her sovereign to Rheims, and July.
 saw him solemnly inaugurated.

The perfidy, or the imprudence of the go- 1430.
 vernor of Compeigne, delivered her at length
 into the hands of her enemies. Even then she
 behav'd, though defenceless, and menac'd with
 death, in a manner becoming a heroine. Her
 enthusiasm and reliance on superior aid sup-
 ported her courage ; for Charles, who had de-
 rived all the benefits he expected from such an
 engine, to his eternal dishonour, made no effort
 to procure her release ; and a barbarous resent-
 ment,

1430. ment, unworthy and becoming generous minds, prompted the English, who had suffered so severely from her prowess, to take a cruel and inhuman revenge. The maid of Orleans, to whom Greece would have raised altars and erected temples, who had rescued her country from a foreign yoke, and her sovereign from a state of the most abject distress, was publickly burnt at Rouen, as the unfortunate Marechale d'Ancre was near two centuries after at Paris, for the suppositious crimes of sorcery and witchcraft.

1431. Meanwhile, tho' the duke of Bedford, in hopes
to of re-animating his depressed countrymen,
1434. caus'd young Henry the sixth to be solemnly crowned at Paris, the war languished on both sides, from their mutual incapacity of exerting fresh efforts. Charles, naturally voluptuous, fond of pleasure, and a slave to beauty, had quitted the fatigues of a camp, to indulge his softer passions. His heart, susceptible of love, had found an object supremely capable of exciting it, in the celebrated Agnes Soreille. She was born at the village of Fromenteau, near Loches in Touraine. Her personal attractions, which are represented by all the contemporary historians as the most seducing, were equalled by the liveliness and gaiety of her imagination. She was peculiarly worthy the lover she possess'd, since amidst all the unlimited influence over him which her charms procured her, she never forgot

forgot he was a king, nor permitted him to sacrifice his glory and interests to the effeminate gratifications of his appetite. On the contrary, when he was sunk in indolence and inaction, she is said to have rous'd him from his lethargy, and excited him to atchievements becoming his birth and dignity*.

1437

to

1434.

The

* The year of her birth was about 1409. Her extraction was noble, her father being Seigneur de St. Geran, & Coudun. She had attained her twenty-second year when she first appear'd at court, in the service of Isabella, wife to René of Anjou, and queen of Naples and Sicily. From that princess she passed into the train of Mary, wife of Charles the seventh. Her influence was during some time closely conceal'd, and only divulg'd by the promotion of all her relations to offices and dignities. "Accessit ad stupri suspicionem propinquorum Agnetis ad dignitates ecclesiasticas repentina promotio," says Gaguin, in his life of Charles the seventh.

Her mind was elevated and noble. She ever attempted to inspire the king with a thirst of glory, and a wish to recover his dominions from the English. More than one historian of that century relate an anecdote of her, which places her grandeur of mind in the highest point of view. It is said, that Charles having in her presence consulted an astrologer respecting his own fortunes and success against the English, Agnes, in her turn, demanded of him her future destiny. —The astrologer replied with the dexterity of a courtier, that "She was fated to be long beloved by a great monarch." —Suffer me then, Sire, said Agnes, addressing herself to the king, to retire from your court, and pass to that of the king of England, to fulfil my destiny! He, unquestionably, is the object of the prediction, since you are

1435.

September.

The treaty concluded at Arras between Charles and Philip duke of Burgundy, which latter prince, after having long fluctuated in uncertainty between the two parties, had yielded at length to sentiments of generous forgiveness, was a mortal blow to the interests of England. The queen dowager Isabella, who had been for many years an object of infamy and public detestation, expir'd of sorrow and consternation at this unwelcome news *; and the regent duke of Bedford,

on the point of losing your crown, which Henry is about to unite to his own.—Charles, it is said, was not insensible to the delicacy and severity of the reproof.—The time when this anecdote is plac'd, is in 1432, at the æra when Henry the sixth had been solemnly crowned at Paris, king of England and France.

Francis the first honour'd and cherish'd her memory. The four elegant lines which that great prince made on her, are well known.

“ Gentille Agnes ! plus d'honneur tu merite,
 “ La cause étant de France recouvrer,
 “ Que ce que peut dans un cloître ouvrir
 “ Clause Nonain, ou bien devote hermite.”

* Isabella of Bavaria, one of the worst queens who has reign'd in France, surviv'd the unhappy Charles the sixth, her husband, about thirteen years. John Boucher, a writer not far remov'd from the time in which she lived, relates her death very minutely in his *Annales d'Aquitaine*.—

“ Incontinent après le traité d'Arras (says he) Madame
 “ Ysabeau de Baviere, veuve du feu roi Charles 6, qui
 “ avoit été longuement entre les mains des Anglois en
 “ grande indigence et pauvreté, fut averti du dit accord et
 “ appointment, et en mourut de douleur en l'hotel du roi,
 “ près

Bedford, whose masterly and judicious policy had alone hitherto preserv'd the declining affairs of his country in that swift decay to which they apparently hastened, had preceded her by a few days. 1435.

The Parisians received their native prince into his capital with loud acclamations; and 1436.

“ près St. Paul à Paris; et fut son corps mené à St. Denis,
 “ et enterré en la chapelle des rois, près du feu Charles 6
 “ son mari. Elle n'eut que quatres cierges, et quatres per-
 “ sonnes à son enterrement. Ce fut grand' honte aux Anglois,
 “ qui l'avoient en leurs mains, qu'ils ne lui firent aucun
 “ honneur à ses exeques.”

Her son, Charles the seventh, being born at the time when her intimacy with Louis duke of Orleans was carried to the greatest heighth, gave some probability to the report that he was the offspring of their incestuous amours. It is said that even the English, whom she had so highly oblig'd, at the expence of honour, nature, and affection, were so ungenerous as to reproach her with this humiliating circumstance. Mezerai says, “ Ils prenoient plaisir de lui
 “ dire en face que le roi Charles n'étoit pas fils de son
 “ mari.”—Gaguin uses nearly the same words: “ Nulla
 “ re magis irritata, quam quod Carolum regem, ejus filium
 “ incesto concubitu natum, Anglus diffamabat.” Her death is said to have been hastened, if not occasioned by the unexpected and rapid change in the affairs of Charles the seventh, her son.

Her funeral was meaner than that of a private gentlewoman. Her body was convey'd in a little boat on the Seine to St. Denis, attended only by four persons; and the prior of St. Denis perform'd the service, not a prelate being present, or any solemnities paid to her remains.

1436
to
1439.

Charles, after long opposing his adverse fortune, began to taste the pleasures of conquest and tranquillity. The condition to which France was reduced, notwithstanding, at this period was the most deplorable and wretched. It exhibited a renewal of the sad scenes which had been acted under John, and in the first years of Charles the fifth. A disorder prevail'd in the provinces approaching to anarchy.—The calamities of war were followed by pestilence and famine.—The soldiery, unemployed during the frequent truces which took place between the two crowns, ravaged the possessions of the defenceless peasants. The royal power was not as yet sufficiently confirm'd to extend any permanent and effectual remedy to these evils; and as Charles resided principally in the royal castles on the Loire, or in Berri, Paris is said to have been so depopulated and abandon'd, that the wolves ventured even into the middle of the street St. Antoine, and carried off the children of the citizens.—A circumstance, which if authentic, indicates a state of the most dreadful and complete misery!

1439—
to
1444.

The earnest desire of redressing these national distresses, induc'd the king to hold out terms of pacification to the English, which in the present declining and distracted situation of their affairs, were neither inglorious or disadvantageous to them. The two rich provinces of Normandy and Guyenne were offered to be ceded to them,

them, under condition of homage. Sound policy should have induc'd and dictated the acceptance of these concessions—but Bedford was no more. Henry the sixth, the weakest prince who ever swayed a sceptre, meek and superstitious, was ill qualified to conduct, or to extricate a state, in conjunctures delicate and critical. The factions of the Cardinal of Winchester, and of Humphry duke of Gloucester, divided the court; and the nation, accusom'd to triumph in every preceding contest with France, and still supported by the recollection of Henry's and Edward's trophies, could not condescend to adopt a temporising and more humiliating tone. Though a suspension of arms was accepted of, and agreed to for some years, the English ministers did not recede from their ancient and ill-founded pretensions on the crown and kingdom.

1439

to

1444.

Meanwhile France saw a final period put to the inveterate and hereditary animosity between the two houses of Burgundy and Orleans. The first of these princes, Philip, justly surnam'd the Good, by an effort of magnanimity rarely found among men, desirous to bury in oblivion the unhappy dissensions between the two families, restor'd the duke of Orleans to liberty, who had languish'd in a captivity of five-and-twenty years ever since the battle of Azincourt, by paying his ransom, which amounted to the enormous sum of three hundred thousand crowns. On the duke of Orleans's

1439 return from England, they met at Gravelines,
to embraced, and exchanged a mutual forgive-
1444. nefs.

1445
and 6.

During the tranquillity of the peace, Charles, occupied alternately in the pursuits of love, in the conviviality of the table, and the pleasures of the chace, indulg'd his natural inclination for these gentler recreations, which had succeeded to the toils of war. The beautiful Agnes Soreille possess'd an unlimited influence over him.—But destin'd like his unhappy successor, Henry the fourth, after having vanquish'd his foreign enemies, to find more implacable ones in his own family, fortune had prepar'd for him in his son a source of disquiet more keen and afflicting, than any external calamities could have proved. The Dauphin Louis his eldest son, had already attain'd his twenty-second year, though the king was still in the vigour of his age. When only sixteen, he had rebell'd against his father, who forgave his misconduct; but this instance of tenderness and lenity was lost on his obdurate and unfeeling mind. Discontented, and anxious to anticipate his power, he not only refus'd subjection to his sovereign and his father, but proceeded to insults the most irritating and criminal.—An incident, which as it peculiarly marks his character, and was attended with some important consequences, I shall relate, happen'd at this juncture.

A noble-

A nobleman of the court having had the mis-
fortune to offend the Dauphin, that Prince de-
termin'd on revenge, and bargain'd with Anto-
ine de Chabannes, Count de Dammartin to as-
saffinate him; but the Count, being dissuaded by
his brother from the perpetration of so unmanly
and dastardly a crime, refused to adhere to the
promise he had rashly made.

1446.

The affair came to the king's knowledge,
who severely reprimanded his son. Louis,
to conceal his own guilt, accus'd the Count of
having suggested to him the means of effecting
the assaffination, but Dammartin, jealous of his
wounded honour, not only denied the accusa-
tion in the royal presence, but offer'd, according
to the laws of chivalry, to justify himself from
the imputation, in single combat against any of
the Dauphin's train. Charles, whose character
was peculiarly open, generous, and candid, saw
and abhor'd the malignity of his son: he even
order'd him to quit his presence, and not to
appear at court for four months. The Dauphin
obey'd, tho' not without menaces; and retir'd
into the province of Dauphiné, where he held
his court, and from whence he return'd no more
till after the king's death*.

1446

and

1447.

The

* Other causes and motives are supposed to have conduced
to heighten the dispute between Charles the seventh and his
son. The Dauphin was the declared enemy of Agnes So-
reille,

1448.

The war between France and England, which had been suspended for several years, at length commenc'd afresh; but conquest, which during the beginning of Charles's reign had attended on his enemies, now declar'd uniformly in his favour. He attack'd Normandy, undertook

1449.

the siege of Rouen in person, and re-entered it in triumph. The Count de Dunois seconded the efforts of his sovereign, and in a few months the whole province was finally re-annex'd to the crown of France, from which Henry the fifth had dismember'd it thirty years preceding.

1450.
February.

The pleasure which Charles felt from this important and victorious campaign, was sadden'd by the loss of his beloved mistress. She expir'd of a dysentery, at the abbey of Jumieges, near Rouen, to which place she had come to meet the king, and to inform him of a conspiracy against his person. Though the contemporary authors express themselves with a studied ambiguity on this event, there is some reason to

reille, and complain'd loudly of her influence over the king. It is pretended, that he carried his resentment against her so far, as to strike her; and this incident is said to have happen'd at the castle of Chinon, where Charles frequently held his court. Agnes demanded reparation for this insult, and the king, in consequence of it, order'd his son to retire into Dauphiné. Belleforet, in his annals, tho' he admits the quarrels between Louis and Agnes, yet disputes the authenticity of this anecdote, which rests principally on the assertions of Gaguin and Varillas.

believe

believe that the Dauphin was concern'd in the plot; and even that Agnes's death was the effect of poison administer'd by his express command *. The king tenderly and passionately lamented her; and she was one of the best and greatest

1450.

* After the unhappy disputes between Agnes and the Dauphin, she retired to Loches in Touraine, where she resided in a castle which Charles the seventh had constructed for her, and appeared no more at court till the end of the year 1449. Her influence over the king, notwithstanding, suffered no diminution by this voluntary exile from him, of near five years. It was the queen herself, Mary of Anjou, who, from a desire of ingratiating herself with the king her husband, prevail'd on Agnes Soreille to return to Paris, from whence she proceeded to Jumieges, where Charles was at that time, during the conquest and reduction of Normandy.—Several of the writers who flourished near the time of Agnes's death, attribute it to poison, and accuse the Dauphin Louis as the author of this crime. These accusations, however, appear to be founded more on the general character of Louis, than on any authentic proof. Chartier, and Monstrelet assert, that she died of a diarrhea. — She was interred in the collegial church at Loches; and so far was Louis the eleventh, when he ascended the throne, from treating her memory or her remains with disrespect, that he betrayed the highest greatness of mind in his conduct respecting her. The canons of Loches having, from a servile desire to gratify the king, proposed to destroy her mausoleum, notwithstanding the bequests which by her will she had made to the church, Louis, so far from permitting or acquiescing in this proposal, reproach'd them with their ingratitude to their benefactress, order'd them to fulfil all her injunctions, and added six thousand livres to the charitable donations which Agnes had originally made.

mistresses

1450. mistresses whom any of the French princes have possessed. The lady of Villequier her niece, by a sort of inheritance in gallantry, succeeded to her place in Charles's favour *.

1450
to
1453. The reduction of Normandy was only a prelude to new acquisitions. The king, animated by his past success, resolv'd to improve the fa-

* Agnes Soreille was created by Charles the seventh Countess of Penthievre, and Lady of Beauté sur Marne. She was in her fortieth year when she died, and left three daughters by the king. They were publickly owned as such by Charles the seventh and Louis the eleventh, and were even called "Filles de France," and natural sisters to the king. Louis the eleventh gave forty thousand ecus of gold as a portion in marriage with the youngest, Jane, at her nuptials with the Count de Sancerre. Charlotte, the eldest, was married to Jacques de Brezé, count de Maulevrier; her death, tho' perhaps deserved, was truly deplorable. She is said to have equall'd her mother in beauty, but a fatal amour which her husband discover'd, proved her ruin. Jean de Troyes has related the circumstances of it; they are so affecting that I shall insert them without any alteration:—"Elle étoit allé à la chasse avec lui; à leur retour chacun se retiroit dans son appartement; Brezé fut averti que sa femme s'étoit retirée avec Pierre de la Vergne, son veneur: il prend son épée, fait briser la porte, trouve la Vergne en chemise, et le tue. Sa femme s'alla cacher sous la couverture d'un lit où étoient couchés ses enfans. Il la tira du lit, et lui plongea son épée dans le Sein: elle étoit à genoux; elle tomba morte."—Louis the eleventh oblig'd the Count de Maulevrier to purchase a remission of this murder by an enormous fine. The celebrated Madame de la Fayette was descended from Pierre de la Vergne.

vourable

favourable moment, and to attempt what his
 grandfather Charles the fifth's untimely and
 lamented death had then prevented—the entire
 expulsion of the English, and their extirpation
 from his dominions. The two provinces of
 Guienne and Gascony were still in their posses-
 sion; the inhabitants, governed during several
 centuries by them, were affectionate to these
 foreign masters, and a very vigorous defence
 might yet have been made—but civil confusion
 aided Charles's arms. The bloody quarrel be-
 tween the contending Roses of York and Lan-
 caster, which delug'd England with slaughter,
 was already on the point of breaking out. No
 timely aid was sent from thence. Four armies,
 commanded by the ablest generals of France,
 entered these provinces, and made the most for-
 tunate and rapid progress; only one effort was
 exerted on the part of the English for their pre-
 servation by the great Talbot and his son, who
 perished in the battle of Castillon. Bourdeaux
 and Bayonne opened their gates to the con-
 queror; and Charles the seventh, who had ac-
 ceded to the crown under circumstances the most
 distressful, yet compleated what neither the po-
 licy or courage of his ancestors had been able
 to effect.

1450
 to
 1453.

1453.
 July.

But if the Monarch was victorious and for-
 tunate, the Father was destin'd to experience a
 different fate. His ungrateful and unnatural
 son

1453
 to
 1455.

1453

to

1455.

son became his most implacable enemy. Several years had elapsed since his departure from court, and the king had frequently commanded him to return, but in vain. His conquests over the English had even been impeded, and stopped in the mid way, by a dangerous insurrection of the Dauphin and the duke of Savoy. Superadded to this, his exactions and oppressions in the province of Dauphiné, where he exercis'd a sort of unlimited and royal power, were grown insupportable. Charles, irritated by such disobedience, and weary of his continued misconduct, commission'd the Count de Dammartin to seize his person. That nobleman, to whose honour he had formerly done the greatest and most sensible injury, proceeded instantly to execute the mandate; but Louis, who had receiv'd timely intelligence of the design, saved himself by a precipitate flight into Franche Comté, from whence he afterwards continued his rout into Brabant.

1456.

Philip, duke of Burgundy, either influenc'd by sentiments of generosity and courtesy, or from motives of policy, receiv'd him, and afforded him an asylum. He even assign'd him a pension of twelve thousand crowns, and gave him the castle of Gueneppe near Brussels for his residence. Here the Dauphin endeavour'd at first to amuse and divert his unquiet mind by the study of astrology, to which he was ever immoderately addicted; but afterwards, with that malevolent

malevolent duplicity which so strongly mark'd his character, and notwithstanding all the benefits which the house of Burgundy had conferred upon him, he attempted to sow the seeds of discontent and quarrel between the duke and his son, the Count de Charolois, in which he succeeded but too well. 1456.

The king attempted in vain by every means to induce the duke of Burgundy to deliver up the Dauphin. By a prediction founded on his knowledge of Louis, and justified by his future conduct, he warn'd Philip that he was nourishing a serpent, which when warm'd would strike it's deadly fangs into the bosom of it's protector. He was even on the point of entering Flanders at the head of an army, to seize the rebellious prince; but laying aside that intention, he determin'd rather to deprive him of the succession, and to leave the crown to his younger son Charles, duke of Berri. It is probable he might have effected this design, if death had not prevented him. 1456
to
1458.

During the latter years of his life, Charles had become distrustful, suspicious, and uneasy: he fear'd the Dauphin's vindictive spirit might push him to attempts the most atrocious. During his residence at the castle of Meun-sur-Yeure in Berri, he receiv'd repeated information, that his own domestics had plotted to destroy him. The wretched king, terrified at an intimation 1459
and 60.

1461. intimation so alarming, and not knowing on whose attachment or fidelity to rely, refus'd obstinately to receive any nourishment during some days; and when at length, induc'd by the importunity of his attendants, he attempted it, nature was no longer able; he could not swallow any
 July, sustenance, and soon after expir'd.

The character of Charles is very amiable. He possess'd all those qualities which conciliate affection, and win the heart. Courteous, gallant, liberal, amorous, and brave; yet sinking, from natural disposition into an effeminate and enervate indolence, which he could not resist; and again rising into the exertion of many of those virtues which distinguish a hero and a prince. Born to experience every vicissitude of fortune, and after triumphing over his political enemies, to find domestic ones more relentless and unfeeling, he may be accounted a fortunate monarch, but a miserable individual.

Though attach'd too closely to his favourites, and sometimes led by that attachment into errors, he never used his authority with rigour, or oppress'd his people by heavy impositions; and his reign, distinguish'd by the entire expulsion of the English from the dominions of France, is one of those on which their historians peculiarly delight to dwell. The kingdom, long torn by every species of foreign and internal commotion, began to recover itself; and no longer
 nourishing

1461.

nourishing in its vitals a hostile and powerful enemy, grew more confirm'd in its internal government, more important in the scale of Europe. By a similar progression, the royal power, hitherto shackled and limited by the feudal regulations, acquiring gradually strength, became wider in its influence, and more resistless in its supremacy. In the subsequent reign, it was carried into a despotism the most extensive and uncontroul'd.

CHAPTER THE THIRD.

Character of Louis the eleventh, and commencement of his reign.—Interview with Henry the fourth, king of Castile.—Louis's violence and oppressions.—League of the public good.—Accession and character of Charles, last duke of Burgundy.—Interview of Peronne.—King's imprisonment, and terrors.—Death of Charles duke of Berri.—Interview with Edward the fourth, at Pecquigni.—Louis's insidious policy.—The duke of Burgundy's attempts on Switzerland, battle of Nancy, and death.—Burgundy re-united to France.—Conclusion of Louis's reign.—His cruelties.—First stroke of an apoplexy.—His pilgrimage.—His encreasing severity.—Minute circumstances of his illness.—Death.—Character.—Mistresses.

1461.

WE are entering upon a reign of a very extraordinary and singular nature. A prince odious in his character, detestable in his conduct; violating every maxim of honourable or virtuous policy; deviating frequently even from the rules of interest; uniformly flagitious, and systematically bad—yet attaining by the mazes of an insidious and eccentric subtlety, to the completion of almost all his views, and acquiring

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quiring a prerogative and authority unknown to his predecessors. Such is Louis the eleventh! —The detail of his actions as a king, will too well prove the justice of the portrait.

1461.

So universally abhorr'd had the rebellion and ingratitude of Louis, while Dauphin, render'd him, that a considerable party was already form'd in the court of Charles the seventh, for his youngest son, the duke of Berri; but the Count du Maine having sent intelligence to Louis of his father's death, he lost not a moment in availing himself of it; and the duke of Burgundy, (long his protector, and now become his vassal,) mounting on horseback, together with his son the Count de Charolois, attended him to Rheims, where he caus'd himself to be immediately crown'd.

The opening of his reign was mark'd with all those changes and alterations customary on the accession of princes; and peculiarly to be expected on that of one who had lived in open enmity with the preceding sovereign. Every maxim of government adopted by Charles, was reversed by Louis; all his officers or favourites degraded with ignominy, and new ones advanced to power. The duke of Alençon, a prince of the blood royal, who had been committed to prison for treasonable practices, was released, and the Count de Dammartin committed to the Bastile: the nobility were dis-

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1463.

1462

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1463.

possessed of their offices, and the people loaded with exactions: the dominions of the duke of Bretagne were invaded, and the duke of Berri was depriv'd of his establishment.

1463.

After beginning his reign in a manner so strongly characteristic of his future measures, Louis hasten'd into the province of Gascony, to an interview with Henry the fourth, surnamed the Impotent, king of Castile. The two sovereigns met at Mauleon, on the confines of the kingdom of Navarre, and formed a contrast not a little remarkable. Henry, vain, magnificent, haughty, and sumptuous, attended with a splendid train. Louis, with no external marks of royalty; mean in his person; clad in coarse cloth, short and unbecoming: a leaden image of the Virgin in his bonnet; and slenderly accompany'd. After a fruitless conference, the two princes returned into their respective dominions, with sentiments of mutual contempt, and alienation.

As Louis became confirm'd in the throne, his character gradually unfolded itself. The line of crooked policy which he pursued, made him ever attentive to the means of contracting and diminishing the power of all the great vassals of the crown. Among these, Philip duke of Burgundy held the first place; Francis duke of Bretagne, the second. Against the former he exerted the arts of intrigue; and, by means of a secret correspondence which he kept up in
his

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his court, procur'd the restitution of those towns on the river Somme, ceded by Charles the seventh at the treaty of Arras to Philip, and which made him master of all Picardy. As the object of this negociation was effected in contradiction to the sentiments of the Count de Charolois, it laid the foundation of that personal hatred which he ever bore the king, and which Louis increas'd by the tenour of all his subsequent conduct.

1463.

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1464.

With the latter of these princes, as less powerful, he scarce observ'd any measures, and the mandates he sent him, were of the most despotic and imperious nature: they forbid him to levy any taxes in his dominions, to strike money, or to term himself "Duke, by the grace of God." Prohibitions of so rigorous a nature would at once have deprived him of all independence, or sovereignty. Francis the second, a weak but generous prince, was at this time duke of Bretagne. Unable to refuse compliance with these haughty orders, he affected to submit to them; while he privately set on foot the means to restrain a power, which threaten'd the subversion of every other.

Desirous however to strengthen his proceedings by the appearance of a national concurrence, the king assembled the states, and laid before them his pretended reasons for so unparallel'd an act of despotism. Charles, duke of Orleans, first prince of the blood, who was

1464.

1464. respectable from his age, and belov'd for his virtues, presum'd to disapprove and oppose his measures; but the unfeeling Louis reproach'd and reprimanded him in expressions so poignant and severe, that the duke, unable to survive this humiliating treatment, died of grief and mortification only two days after. His death did not soften the heart, or appease the resentment of his relentless sovereign: it was perpetuated in a breast which never forgave, which knew no emotions of tenderness, and respected no ties of consanguinity. The family of Orleans had the most just pretensions to the duchy of Milan, in right of Valentina Visconti, mother of the deceased duke; but Louis, so far from espousing these claims, allied himself with Francisco Sforza, who had usurp'd those dominions on the extinction of the house of Visconti, and secur'd him in possession of them from motives of hatred to the princes of his own blood.

Decem-
ber.

1465. These reiterated acts of violence and oppression, produced in the end a general convulsion. The first nobility, roused by past indignities, and apprehensive that they would become more intolerable, took up arms against the author of them. The Count de Dunois, grown grey under the late king, and universally rever'd, appear'd at the head of his vassals: the Count de St. Pol, and the duke of Nemours, were joined by Dammartin, who had escap'd from his imprisonment.

prisonment. The duke of Bretagne prepar'd to enter France with an army; the duke of Berri fled to him for an asylum; and the Count de Charolois, at the head of a considerable body of forces, directed his march strait to the capital.

1465.

In this alarming concurrence of circumstances, the genius of Louis, active, penetrating, and peculiarly calculated to extricate him from difficulties, eminently appear'd. On the first news of the conspiracy, he fell immediately on the weakest leaders, and reduc'd them to implore his clemency. The apprehension that his enemies might take possession of Paris, oblig'd him to extend it to them; and he was on his way to secure that city, when the confederate army meeting him at Montlhery, an action unavoidably ensued. It was not decisive; but the king, anxious to preserve the metropolis, and distrustful of the attachment of its citizens, first decamp'd and re-enter'd Paris. Compell'd by the necessity of his affairs, he bent with all the pliability of address, adopted manners the most engaging and popular, courted the wives of the mechanics, promis'd a repeal of every burdensome or extraordinary impost, and extended several acts of grace to retain them in allegiance.

July.

Meanwhile the army of the duke of Bretagne having join'd the Count de Charolois, form'd a

1465. prodigious assemblage of troops : they assumed the title of the " League for the public good ;" and directing their course towards the capital, encamped in the surrounding villages. After vainly attempting however to gain possession of it by blockade, or famine, or intrigue, and no insurrection taking place, terms of accommodation were proposed. Louis, who knew that this powerful combination could only be successfully reduc'd by effecting its disunion, complied with all their demands, resolving only to adhere to the treaty while he should be compell'd to it by force. He yielded therefore, though with great reluctance, the duchy of Normandy to Charles his brother ; invested the Count de St. Pol with the sword of Constable ; restor'd the towns upon the Somme to the Count de Charolois, and replac'd the other chiefs of the confederacy in the possession of all their lands and offices. The league thus broken, each member of it return'd into his own respective dominions or castles ; while the crafty king, only waiting for the favourable moment, held himself in readiness to improve it to the utmost.

1466. The insurrections of the Flemings against the house of Burgundy, and the discontents of the Normans at the administration of their new duke, who suffer'd himself to be govern'd by weak counsellors, afforded Louis that opportunity which he so anxiously desir'd. Vigorous
and

and rapid in his movements when the occasion demanded it, he first compell'd the duke of Bretagne to abandon Charles his brother; and then depriving the defenceless prince of his newly-ceded duchy, forc'd him to fly as a miserable refugee to Francis his ally for shelter. The duke of Burgundy, broken with years and infirmities, could extend no protection to his friends in person; and his son the Count de Charolois was occupied in reducing the rebellious inhabitants of Liege. They endeavoured to engage the king of England in their quarrel; but Edward the fourth was as yet not sufficiently confirm'd in the throne, to undertake a foreign war; and Louis, victorious over so many enemies, and render'd stronger by their opposition, grew more tyrannical in his conduct, and more oppressive in his government.

1466.

At this time Philip duke of Burgundy died at Bruges, in a very advanced age. His justice, beneficence, and paternal attention to his people, obtained him the surname of "the Good." Superadded to these amiable qualifications, the extent of territory he possess'd, and the splendid munificence of his temper, ranked him among the greatest and most powerful princes of his time. Charles, Count de Charolois his son succeeded him.—Of fiery and impetuous manners, bold even to rashness, inflexible in the prosecution

1467.
June.

1467. prosecution of designs he had once adopted, aiming at royalty, and exhausting his revenues in vain attempts to extend his dominions, he was at last over-reach'd in policy by the king of France; and unequal to the vast projects he had conceiv'd, he destroy'd the fabric which his three predecessors had erected, and expir'd the victim of his immoderate and ill-regulated ambition.

Though Louis, from the prompt and immediate seizure of the occasion to attack the dukes of Bretagne and Berri, had gain'd the ascendancy, yet this advantage was only temporary. Charles, now become duke of Burgundy, his inveterate enemy, was return'd victorious from Flanders, and had reviv'd the opposition of his two allies, by leading a powerful army to their assistance.

1468. The king, wary and cautious, trusting no event to fortune which wisdom or subtlety might effect, and like Philip of Macedon, believing no fortress impregnable where a mule laden with silver could enter, attack'd the duke first with gold, and bought a truce at the price of one hundred and twenty thousand crowns. As this purchase however procur'd only a suspension of hostilities, and as he was desirous of detaching the duke altogether from his connections, the king determin'd on a personal interview with him. Relying on his powers of persuasion, and the dupe of his own vanity, Louis nam'd

1468.

Peronne in Picardy as the place of their meeting. Willing at the same time to give the duke an incontestible proof of his perfect confidence in his honour, he came without any guards, and only attended by two or three noblemen of his court. Charles receiv'd him with every mark of distinction, and lodg'd him in the town of Peronne; but several Burgundian and other foreign persons of rank arriving, who were the king's avowed enemies, Louis began to entertain some apprehensions respecting his safety, and requested the duke to assign him apartments in the castle, as more secure from insult or injury. By this step, still more imprudent than the first, he render'd himself absolutely a prisoner.

Previous to the interview, the king, whose grand object was to keep the duke of Burgundy constantly employ'd in domestic wars, had sent agents privately to Liège, to induce the inhabitants to resume their arms by a promise of his protection. He did not expect the consequence of this message to be instantaneous; but the people, impetuous and violent, no sooner received the intimation, than they broke out into open rebellion, massacred their governors, and committed a thousand excesses. When Charles receiv'd this intelligence, he became furious with resentment. Perfectly conscious at whose instigation the disorder had been commenc'd,

1468.

commenc'd, he denounc'd vengeance against the perfidious monarch, order'd the castle gates to be shut, and even debated with himself whether he should not put him immediately to death.

Louis, naturally timid and irresolute, in the hands of his mortal enemy whom he had deeply offended, surrounded with people who detested him, and shut up in a chamber at the foot of that very tower where Hebert, Count de Vermandois, had formerly caused Charles the Simple king of France to be murder'd, underwent by anticipation all the horrors of death. The duke of Burgundy kept him three days in this painful suspense; during which time the king, whose subtlety never forsook him in so dangerous a crisis, found means to engage some of the duke's attendants in his interests. He was at length releas'd, but under conditions the most ignominious and humiliating. Charles oblig'd the king to accompany him with three hundred men at arms to the siege of Liège, which he took by storm; he punish'd with extreme severity their disobedience; and then dismissing his sovereign lord, whom he had compell'd to be a witness of all these transactions, scarce deigned to accompany him half a league on his way, and bid him adieu with a sort of haughty civility.

There is no incident of Louis the eleventh's reign, no action of his life, so apparently con-

tradictory

tradictory to the whole tenor of his character, as his behaviour in this celebrated interview. His sagacity and his cautious temper bordering on fear, seem equally to have forsaken him; and the most crafty and politic prince of his age suffer'd himself to be over-reach'd by one the least endow'd with those qualities *.

1468.

Among

* Comines, who was a chamberlain to Charles the Bold, and slept in the duke's own apartment during the whole time of Louis the eleventh's detention in the castle of Peronne, has given us the most minute relation of the principal circumstances attending this celebrated interview. He was witness to every variation of passion, and every change of mind which successively actuated the duke of Burgundy. There can, indeed, be very little doubt that Comines was active in his exertions to extricate the king; and as little, that Louis was not deficient in rewarding his services on that most critical occasion. Comines does not however, assert, that Charles had it in contemplation to put his royal prisoner to death; though he insinuates, that if the persons with whom the duke of Burgundy consulted, had been disposed to inflame and irritate his resentment against the king, some fatal step might have been taken; "*et, pour le moins,*" adds Comines, "*le Roi eut été mis en cette grosse tour*"—alluding to the tower where Charles the Simple was confin'd from the year 922, 'till his death in 926.—"*Nous n'aigrîmes rien, mais adoucîmes a notre pouvoir,*" says Comines. Louis the eleventh could not pay such a piece of service too highly. It is evident that Charles was uncertain how to act, and underwent alternately every agitation of mind natural to such a state of painful irresolution. He kept the king confin'd three days without deigning to see him. The gates of the castle were shut and guarded

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to

1471.

Among the conditions to which the king was reduc'd to submit while a prisoner at Peronne, he had promis'd to cede Champagne and Brie

guarded all that time. During the first day, all was terror and fright throughout the city of Peronne. On the second day the duke grew more calm, and held a council to determine on the conduct he should observe towards his prisoner, which lasted the greater part of the day, and a considerable part of the night. Various were the opinions delivered. The king, during this perilous juncture was not wanting to himself. He promised to reward all those who would aid him, and actually distributed the greater part of fifteen thousand crowns among the duke's attendants.—On the third night, Charles was in perpetual agitation; he neither undressed himself, nor slept; but lay down from time to time on the bed, and walked continually up and down his apartment, with Comines. In the morning he resumed all his former indignation, threatening to proceed to an immediate extremity against the king; but afterwards becoming more tractable, he determined to liberate his captive, on receiving his solemn promise to accompany him without delay, to reduce the revolted inhabitants of Liège. Charles went in person to carry this determination to the king, which he deliver'd in manner and terms the most haughty. Louis submitted to every condition demanded, to obtain his release. The agreement was instantly made; and the two princes swore to adhere to it faithfully, upon a Crucifix which Louis carried with him, and which was regarded as peculiarly sacred, having been worn by Charlemagne. Charles compell'd the king to be witness to his capture and punishment of Liège; and at length, at Louis's urgent and repeated request, permitted him to return into his own dominions, humbled and degraded to the lowest degree. These particulars enumerated are all from Comines; and of the most unquestionable authenticity.

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to Charles his brother; but as the vicinity of those provinces to the Burgundian dominions would have infallibly secur'd the alliance between the two dukes, Louis no sooner effected his escape, than he exerted all his abilities and address, to prevail on his brother to accept the province of Guyenne in exchange. The young prince, weak, and yielding to the affected demonstrations of kindness shewn him by the king, complied with the proposal; but convinc'd when it was too late of the error he had committed, and allur'd by the hopes of a marriage with Mary of Burgundy, Charles's only daughter and heiress of his vast possessions, he began to renew his confederacy with that prince, and to raise troops.—His death, which happen'd at this time, and which was mark'd with every appearance of poison, the evident interest which Louis had to perpetrate this crime, superadded to the personal hatred he bore the duke his brother; all these circumstances conspired to render him justly and universally suspected of the fact*. Guyenne was

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to
1471.

1472.
May.

* Charles duke of Berri appears to have been an amiable prince, but of slender capacity. Alternately the slave of superstition and of love, he was govern'd by his confessor or his mistress according to his predominant passion. The latter prevail'd; and the Lady of Montforeau triumphed over the Abbot of St. John d'Angeli. His name was Favre Vefois, of the order of St. Benedict. Jealous of this pre-eminence,

1472. was immediately seized on by the king, and reunited to the crown.

The news of this deplorable and unexpected event no sooner reach'd the duke of Burgundy, than all his indignation and resentment revived. He enter'd Picardy with an army, determin'd to revenge his unhappy ally, to whose memory he

eminence, and bent on revenge, the monk caus'd a peach to be poison'd, which he presented to the lady while sitting at supper with the duke and himself. She divided it with a knife, and giving half to her lover, eat the rest herself; the consequence was immediately fatal to her, and she expir'd in great agonies. The duke, from the strength of his constitution, resisted the poison during some time; tho' he lost his hair and nails which came off, yet he linger'd near six months, and then died at Bourdeaux. The abbot fled; but being seized and carried into Bretagne by order of Francis the second the reigning duke, he was brought to Nantes. It was intended to bring him to a public trial, in the hope and expectation of his accusing Louis the eleventh, as his accomplice or abettor—but on the morning appointed to conduct him before the judges, he was found dead in his cell, strangled and lying on the floor. As by this catastrophe, a veil was drawn before the whole affair, it was commonly believ'd that the king had not hesitated to conceal the first crime by the perpetration of a second.—Du Clos, in his history of the reign of Louis the eleventh, has examined with great accuracy the nature of the duke of Guyenne's death. He seems to make no question of its having been effected by poison, but after every enquiry into the authors of this crime, he leaves them mysterious and uncertain. Tho' he names Louis himself, he does it without any strong or well-founded suspicion of his guilt or participation. It would even

1472.

he sacrific'd every inhabitant who fell into his power; but having fail'd in an attempt upon the city of Beauvais, and exhausting his forces by the efforts of an impotent frenzy rather than of a manly vengeance, he was soon under the necessity of accepting a truce which Louis offer'd him. This latter prince, uniform and systematical in his movements, and always attaining his ends by those means which seemed most remote from their object, grew every year more despotic, and added some new acquisition to the royal authority: he seiz'd on the territories of the

even seem by his enumeration of the circumstances which attended the duke's illness, that the poison was not intended for him, as it was neither foreseen nor apprehended that he would taste of the peach given to Collette de Jambes, lady of Montforeau, his mistress.—There is frequently an ambiguity about the deaths of distinguished personages, which must unavoidably give rise to much historical scepticism.—Louis the eleventh, from an affectation of discovering and revenging his brother's death, procured the documents tending to trace it's authors to be brought to him, and appointed commissioners to enter upon their examination; but this tribunal came to no decision, and the members composing it, were rewarded by the king. Such a conduct only added weight to the suspicions already universally entertained.—Voltaire, who usually rejects and ridicules the imputations of poison, admits the unquestionable certainty of this crime. He even inclines highly to accuse and suspect Louis the eleventh as it's author; "Lui," says he, "qui etant Dauphin, avoit fait craindre un parricide a Charles VII, son pere."

1472. Count d'Armagnac, committed the duke of Alençon to prison, and retain'd the duke of Bretagne in his subjection.

1473. While Louis thus essentially encreas'd his power, the duke of Burgundy, who was intoxicated by a fatal passion for extending his dominions, began that train of errors and misconduct which terminated in his fall. Instead of watching with circumspection the minutest actions of his perfidious and powerful neighbour, he engag'd in a quarrel with the whole Germanic body by laying siege to the town of Nuiz on the Rhine under pretexts the most insufficient, and even persisted in it to the destruction of his whole army.

1475. In the mean time Edward the fourth, having vanquish'd all the partizans of the house of Lancaster, and establish'd himself in the throne, began to turn his view to the recovery of those possessions, to which every king of England since Edward the third had laid claim. Endow'd with martial qualities, successful in every war where he had personally commanded, and still in the vigour of his age, he seem'd capable of renewing the laurels won by Henry the fifth at Azincourt. Invited by the pressing and repeated importunities of the duke of Burgundy, he landed with an army at Calais; but his ally, engag'd in the siege of Nuiz, and pertinaciously adhering to his design, after detaining him some time,
appear'd

appear'd unattended and alone, instead of bringing with him according to his promise, a powerful body of troops. Edward however advanc'd into Picardy, in the expectation that the Constable de St. Pol would, as he had promis'd, deliver into their hands the town of St. Quintin; but St. Pol, by a double piece of treachery, deceiv'd his allies, and gave Louis time to avert the storm. 1475.

The subtle king had recourse to artifice and negotiation, his usual engines: he knew that the decision of arms was ever uncertain, that of intrigue less hazardous. Edward, voluptuous and indolent, lent a ready ear to these proposals; an accommodation was soon manag'd, and a peace between them was signed at Amiens, notwithstanding the duke of Burgundy's opposition. The two monarchs in consequence agreed on an interview at the bridge of Pecquigni, near that city. A grated barrier was erected on the middle, and two boxes constructed for the purpose. Louis, whose pliant genius accommodated itself to every situation of politics, and who thought no submissions too mean for the attainment of his views, flatter'd the English prince, invited him with all the apparent cordiality of friendship to his capital, and at the same time secur'd by presents the principal nobility in his interests. August

1475.

Edward return'd to England; the duke of Burgundy, compell'd by necessity and weakness, accepted a suspension of arms; and the Count de St. Pol, whose perfidy had render'd him obnoxious to every party, was deliver'd up by Charles into the king's hands, who after a hasty trial caus'd him to be condemn'd for treason, and instantly beheaded *.

19th December.

Untaught

* Louis de Luxembourg, Count de St. Pol, and Constable of France, certainly merited the fate which overtook him by his repeated acts of perfidy and ingratitude. On the day appointed for his death, he was brought from the Bastile to the hall of the chamber of criminals, where the commissioners, before whom he had been arraign'd and tried, were assembled. The Chancellor rising up, address'd him in these words:—" Monsieur de St. Pol, you " have always been esteem'd one of the bravest and most " undaunted lords of the kingdom, and must not forfeit " that character to-day, when you will stand in need of all " your courage and firmness."—He then demanded from him the collar of the king's order of knighthood, and the sword of Constable. St. Pol surrender'd the former instantly, after kissing it; the latter, he said, had been taken from him when he was arrested.—The decree was then publicly read, which sentenc'd him to be beheaded. The Constable having heard it, only said, " God be prais'd!—it is a pretty " severe sentence. I pray God not to withdraw his pre- " sence from me this day."—When led out to execution he display'd the highest composure, equanimity, and courage. Mass was said to him; he was made to kiss the consecrated vessels, and receiv'd the viaticum. After having continued some minutes in prayer upon the scaffold, he

rose

Untaught by the ill success which had attended all his plans of ambition and greatness, the duke of Burgundy persisted in the pursuit of

1476.

rose up, adjusted with his foot the cushion prepar'd for him to kneel on, order'd his eyes to be covered, and laid down his head; it was sever'd from his body at one stroke: the executioner then plung'd it into a pail of water to wash away the blood, and afterwards held it up to the view of the people. His head and body were soon after put into a coffin, and interred the same evening.

Four friars were appointed to attend him in his dying moments. To them he gave sixty crowns of gold to dispose of in charitable donations, a ring to put upon the finger of the holy Virgin Mary, and a stone which he usually wore about his neck as a preservative from poison, and which he requested might be sent to his son. Louis permitted the money and the ring to be appropriated to the ends for which the Count had destin'd them; but retain'd the stone, on account of it's supposed virtues.

The Constable de St. Pol was seized at Mons in Hainault, by order of the duke of Burgundy, and after being detain'd some time as his prisoner, was deliver'd up to the commissioners sent to receive him on the part of Louis the eleventh, at the gate of the city of Peronne. The Chancellor of Burgundy, and the Seigneur d'Imbercourt, who were his inveterate enemies, performed their sovereign's orders for his delivery with an officious and cruel haste. He was instantly conducted to Paris. Comines says, that he had been informed, messengers arrived from the duke of Burgundy, only three hours after the Constable had been given up, countermanding the orders under which his officers had acted; but they came too late. Comines, tho' he confesses the perfidy and many state crimes of the Count de St. Pol, yet severely arraigns the conduct of Charles the Bold, and imputes it to avarice and rapacity.

1476. them. He engag'd in a dispute with the Swiss cantons, nor would hearken to the humble and repeated applications, which they made to him for peace. These virtuous and hardy people, who had purchased their freedom by the boldest opposition to Austrian tyranny, and who cherished amid their lakes and mountains the warmest attachment to it, resisted his invasion with determined courage; and after having defeated him in two engagements, at Granson and at Morat, obliged him to renounce his enterprize with disgrace.

1476
and 7.

1477. Still bent on conquests, and driven almost to madness by his repeated defeats, Charles laid siege to Nancy in Lorraine, though with only three thousand men, and amidst the rigours of winter. René duke of Lorraine attack'd him with a superior force. At the first shock, the Count de Campobasso, a Neapolitan on whom the duke of Burgundy had conferr'd many favours, basely withdrew with four hundred horse which he commanded; and at the same time, by an act of unparallel'd ingratitude and treason, he left twelve or fifteen men about the duke's person, with a strict command to assassinate him in his flight. They executed the detestable commission too faithfully, and the unhappy duke was found dead, pierc'd with three wounds.—It is not certain what motive influenc'd Campobasso to commit so foul a crime. It is said that

5th Janu-
ary.

Charles

Charles had once struck him, and that revenge stimulated him to it; but history has not clearly elucidated this point *

1477.

Thus

* Campobasso had been banish'd from Naples, on account of his adherence to the faction of Anjou in that kingdom. From whatever source his hatred to the duke of Burgundy originated, he carried it to the greatest length, since he certainly offer'd Louis the eleventh repeatedly, to deliver up to him his master alive or dead. The king, how little scrupulous soever he was to circumvent his enemies, abhorr'd so black a treachery, and even sent Charles intimation of the design, but the infamous opinion which the duke entertained of the person from whom this information came, induced him to neglect and despise it. "If," said he, "it were true, the king would never have imparted "to me so important a secret." He even redoubled his marks of confidence and attachment to the perfidious Neapolitan.

The ill success of the duke of Burgundy was in a great measure owing to the disparity of numbers. He himself fought with the most heroic courage, and expos'd his person wherever the danger was most imminent and conspicuous. When the rout became general, he was borne away in the flight. Tho' the generality of the French authors assert that he was kill'd by the emissaries of Campobasso, station'd for that purpose, yet this is not absolutely certain. Du Clos says, that the duke was closely pursued by Claude Blomont, Senchal of St. Die, to whom he repeatedly cried out for quarter; but Blomont being deaf, and not knowing what he said, unhors'd him with his lance. In this condition, oppress'd with wounds, with fatigue, and the weight of his armour, he was not able to recover himself, and was trampled to death in the crowd.—Comines, who in many parts of his

1477. Thus fell the last male of the great house of Burgundy. Mary, his only daughter, who had

incomparable Memoirs, is as diffuse as curiosity can desire, is very concise in his mention of the duke's death, and the circumstances attending it. He however, imputes it to Campobasso and the persons placed by him, to the number of twelve or thirteen, near the duke's person; of which men, Comines says, he personally knew two or three. He adds, that the inhabitants of Nancy were well acquainted with the treacherous intentions of Campobasso towards his lord; and that their expectations of his destroying Charles, supported their nearly-exhausted courage. To such a degree did this opinion operate, that had not the besieged fully relied on the completion of Campobasso's assurances, they would have infallibly surrendered the city.

—This traitor went over with about one hundred and sixty men at arms, to René, duke of Lorraine, who was at the head of the forces arrived to raise the siege; but the Germans, with a generous indignation and resentment of his treachery, absolutely refused to permit him to mix with their bands, commanding him instantly to retire, as they would not allow traitors to stay in their camp. He accordingly repaired to a neighbouring pass and castle call'd Condé, where he waited to fall upon the soldiers of the Burgundian army; fortifying and blocking the defile which he occupied with carts, to prevent their escaping.

The duke's body, tho' carefully sought after, could not be discover'd for two days after the action, till Campobasso sent an Italian page who pointed out the spot where he fell, which was at some distance from the field of battle. The duke was entirely naked, lying on his belly, his face close to a piece of ice in the marsh where he had expir'd, and which was so hard frozen, that they were obliged to dig it out with pick-axes. He was wounded in three places;

one

not yet attain'd her twentieth year, was unable to assert her title to the ample possessions which devolved

1477.

one wound was made by a halberd which had split his jaw; the two others, by a pike; the first having pierc'd both his thighs from side to side, and the last enter'd a little higher. The duke of Lorraine caus'd him to be transported to Nancy, and laid on a bed of state, in an apartment hung with black velvet. He afterwards paid him the customary funeral honours, which were of a most singular nature.—René wore on that occasion a golden beard reaching to his middle. Previous to his scattering holy water on the corpse, he advanc'd up to the deceased prince, and taking him by the hand, address'd him in these words—"God rest thy soul; thou hast given us much trouble and grief!"

Charles's errors and vices seem to have been more pernicious to himself, than injurious to others. He possessed many sublime and shining qualities; among which his undaunted intrepidity, liberality, application, and magnificence were peculiarly eminent. He was of a middle stature, of a vigorous frame of body, and capable of enduring great fatigue. The lineaments of his countenance were harsh and unpleasing, the features of his face appearing to indicate the fierceness of his natural disposition.—These circumstances of the duke's character and death are chiefly borrowed from Comines and Du Clos.

The "Chronique scandaleuse," written by John de Troyes, agrees with the last-mentioned historian in almost every particular, and adds some others not less curious.—"Charles's body," says he, "was distinguish'd from the others that lay near it in the same state of nakedness, by six marks, which infallibly ascertained his identity. The first was the want of his upper teeth, which had been beaten out by a fall; the second was a scar on his throat, occasioned by a wound he receiv'd at the battle

" of

1477. devolved to her. The imprudence and misfortunes of her father had left the state exhausted, the treasury empty, a council dismayed and feeble, an army almost exterminated.— In this distressed situation she implor'd the protection of Louis; she submitted herself and her dominions to his pleasure; she even pressingly requested, that by a marriage with a

“ of Montlhery; the third, his great nails, which he always wore longer than any of his courtiers; fourthly, another scar on his left shoulder; the fifth was, a fistula on his right groin; and lastly, a nail of his foot that grew into his little toe.—His physician, chaplain, and gentlemen of his bed-chamber recognized their lord by these marks.”

A long time notwithstanding elapsed, before the duke of Burgundy's death was universally believed among his own subjects. Reports were circulated, and eagerly received by the credulous multitude, that he was gone to Jerusalem, or had retir'd to pass the remainder of his days in solitude and penitence. To so extravagant a length were these apprehensions carried, that great sums of money were lent on the condition of re-payment when the duke return'd. The states of Burgundy which were assembled at Dijon, when they were required to acknowledge Louis the eleventh as their lawful sovereign, complied with this express exception, that the king should evacuate the duchy, in case Charles their rightful prince return'd. A strong proof how much that event appear'd possible, and even probable to them!—Many similar examples of the difficulty with which the multitude are induced to believe the deaths of those they love, are to be found in all histories. The inhabitants of Rouen, who saw the execution of the famous maid of Orleans, which was perform'd in the most solemn and public manner, yet doubted of her death, and continued long to expect her re-appearance.

prince

prince of France, her territories might be reunited to the crown in all their branches.—1477.
 The conduct of the king to the young princess on this occasion, was equally destitute of magnanimity, as it was of true policy. To the former sentiment he was ever a stranger; but nothing, except his unrelenting detestation of the race of Burgundy, and that eccentric, peculiar path in which he delighted to tread, could have induc'd him to prefer the hostile seizure of a part of her dominions, to the tranquil and undisputed possession of the whole. Such was however the alternative he chose. His army immediately rendered themselves masters of Burgundy almost without opposition *.

The

* Comines circumstantially relates the particulars of the arrival of the news of the defeat of Charles before Nancy. The king was at Plessis les Tours, his usual and favourite residence; he was in hourly and anxious expectation of accounts from Lorrain, and had promis'd a considerable recompence to the person who should be the first to bring him any intelligence respecting the duke of Burgundy. Monsieur de Lude, who slept without the castle of Plessis, stop'd the messenger who came with the express from the Seigneur de Craon; and the man not daring to refuse to deliver up his letters to a nobleman of his high rank, Mons^r de Lude came before day-light to the wicket, and knocked, demanding entrance. He then presented the dispatches: they only contained the account of the duke's defeat and flight; stating that it was uncertain whether he had escaped or not after the action.—The joy of Louis was immoderate and unconcealed, upon this event. He gave the most public demonstrations of it to all his courtiers and attendants. He order'd

1477.

The young and unprotected duchess, whose condition, so justly the object of compassion, could not soften the malignant heart of Louis, was necessitated after a number of delays and great irresolution, to accept the hand of the arch-duke Maximilian, son to the emperor Frederic the third, a prince who was by no means capable of recovering her dismembered territories from so powerful an antagonist. The king of England was bound by every principle of policy and wisdom, to assist and support her declining fortunes; but Louis, subtle and provident, had precluded this channel of succour by a promise of marrying the Dauphin Charles to Edward's eldest daughter, tho' without any intention of fulfilling the engagement; and after some feeble and ineffectual efforts on the part of Maximilian, all the duchy of Burgundy and the province of Artois remained to France.

1478.

As Louis the eleventh avanc'd in years, the vices of his nature growing inveterate, obtained the fullest ascendancy over him. The despotism which he had establish'd, leaving no barrier to his authority, unveil'd and gave full scope to that im-

order'd it to be read to all his officers, shewing them the letters. Immediately afterwards he heard mass, and then commanding dinner to be served in his apartment, entertained them publickly, conversing on the news just received. He even went so far, as immediately to give away the domain of the duke of Burgundy, and to distribute various lands of that prince to those about him.

placable

placable cruelty which characteris'd him through every stage of his life *. He had nourished an unceasing desire of vengeance against the duke of Nemours ever since the "League of the Public Good," and was now determin'd to gratify it. That unfortunate nobleman dreading his sovereign's resentment, had retir'd to the fortrefs of Carlar, among the mountains of Auvergne. Louis sent the Seigneur de Beaujeu, whom he had married to his daughter Anne, with orders to besiege him in it; but the peculiar and almost inaccessible situation of the castle rendering it very difficult to gain possession by force, the duke of Nemours receiv'd the most solemn assurances of safety, if he would surrender himself. Reposing on the honour of his enemy, he complied: but the king, who sport-

1478.

* The use of iron cages, introduced and render'd familiar under Louis the eleventh, in which he used to detain prisoners of state who were chained with enormous fetters, impresses with horror. The Count du Perche, a nobleman of the highest rank, son to the Duke of Alençon, and a prince of the blood, was confin'd in one of these engines for three months, tho' not guilty of the crime imputed to him, and only received his allowance of food thro' the grate. The Cardinal de la Balue remain'd many years in a cage in the castle of Loches. It was customary with Louis to place himself behind a screen, while criminals were examined and put to the torture. Gibbets were usually erected round the castles where he resided, and these marks of cruelty distinguished his abode.

ed

1478. ed with all the ties of virtue and society, caus'd him, in violation of his solemn compact, to be carried to the Bastile : he then compell'd, tho' with difficulty, the reluctant judges to condemn him, and order'd him to be beheaded. Nor did his revenge stop there ; but, by an unexampled refinement in cruelty, he commanded the two sons of the duke, as yet in early childhood, and of consequence incapable of any participation in the treason, to be placed directly under the scaffold, and covered with the blood of their wretched father, which descended on their heads *.

These

* James d'Armagnac, duke of Nemours, was one of the first noblemen in the kingdom. He had receiv'd numerous and distinguishing marks of Louis's favour, which, it must be confess'd, he had repaid with great ingratitude. The king had even repeatedly pardon'd his crimes and treasons.— During the siege of Carlat, the duchess of Nemours, who lay-in at the time, died of terror and distress. He himself was conducted to the Bastile, and shut up, as was then common with criminals of state, in a cage. The king being inform'd that on his trial, the judges had permitted him to come out of his cage during the time he was interrogated, highly blam'd their lenity, remanded him back into it, order'd him to be put to the rack, and even prescrib'd himself the exact form of his examination. The execution of the duke was perform'd with unusual solemnity. He was conducted to the place appointed for it, on a horse cover'd with black, and was afterwards confess'd, previous to his death,

LOUIS THE ELEVENTH.

95

These are recitals at which humanity shudders; but what shall we say to the universal testimony of the French historians, and even of Comines himself, who assure us, that during his reign Louis put to death more than four thousand persons by various species of torture, without even the form of a trial; and that he usually was present himself at their executions, in which he express'd a barbarous satisfaction? Scarce do the frantic excesses of Caligula surpass those of Louis in atrociousness or number. Happily we draw towards the termination of this tragedy.

1479
and 80.

While every public and private prosperity seemed to attend on the king, and no foreign or internal commotion disturbed his schemes, the time of his death approach'd. He was at a village near Chinon in Touraine, when he was seized with a fit of an apoplexy: he lay two days motionless and speechless; at the end of which time, his voice and intellects returned, but not the health he had previously en-

1480.
March.

death, in a chamber hung in the same manner. The body, after his death, was delivered to the Cordeliers of Paris, who came, to the number of one hundred and forty, to receive it with all possible respect, and interred it with funeral honours in their chapel. His confiscated estates were all divided among the king's ministers and favourites.

joy'd.

1480: joy'd*. Render'd more distrustful by this symptom of his approaching end, and jealous lest from any supposed personal incapacity attempts should be made to infringe his authority, he redoubled his vigilance and circumspection. As the duke of Bourbon appear'd to be the only prince who possess'd qualities which could give him any jealousy, he seiz'd without accusal or pretext, on all his lands; and even endeavour'd to in-

* The king had just risen from table at the time of this apoplectic seizure. Comines relates every particular of it. Louis had been to hear mass at a little parish church about a quarter of a league from the village of Forges, near Chinon. He recover'd his senses and even speech, to a certain degree, as soon as the air was admitted; and was so well as to get on horseback, and return to Forges the same evening. It was at first apprehended he could not recover, as he was not able to speak, and scarce shew'd any marks of retaining his senses. The first proof of his returning faculties which he betrayed, was by making a sign to open the windows; but whether his attendants thought it prejudicial to him, or whether they did not understand his signs, they kept him near the fire in a close room. Angelo Catto, his physician, coming into the apartment, caus'd them to be open'd. Louis by degrees recover'd his sense and speech, tho' it was a considerable time before he could perfectly make those about him understand what he said.—So jealous was he of his authority, that he inform'd himself who were the persons that had prevented the windows from being opened, and instantly banish'd them the court. An opposition to his will even in the smallest trifle, he ever consider'd as a heinous offence, and severely punish'd.

vent accusations against him, by which he might ultimately ruin him, and put him to death: 1480.

While he was engaged in these occupations, a second stroke of an apoplexy again warned him of his end. To avert the impending calamity, he made a pilgrimage to the abby of St. Claude in Franche Comté: his devotion and his cruelty both increased; he was attended in this mock pilgrimage by six thousand men at arms, and left bloody traces of his rout in almost every place through which he passed. 1481.

So far from relaxing his accustomed severity as he approached the verge of life, his temper hardened into a sterner barbarity. His queen, whose patient and enduring attachment, whose mild and silent virtues merited a better treatment, he banished into Savoy, after having kept her during many years shut up in one or other of the royal castles, where he rarely visited her, and in which she resided as a simple individual without state, and almost without attendants. By his last will, he expressly precluded her from any share in the government, and endeavour'd to inspire his son with sentiments of distrust and aversion towards his mother*.

The

* Charlotte of Savoy, wife to Louis the eleventh, was married to him in 1457, when she was scarce thirteen years of age, during the residence of that prince in the dominions of the duke of Burgundy. She was a very amiable and virtuous

1481.

The young Dauphin Charles, he kept as a sort of prisoner in the castle of Amboise, where none were permitted to approach him except servants and persons of the meanest condition. No education was given him, nor any instructions infused into his early mind, from a dread that such information might awaken his dormant qualities, and induce him to make attempts against the government.

His treatment of Louis duke of Orleans, first prince of the blood, was similar. He carried him with him a captive wherever he mov'd; and by one of those abominable strokes of policy which discriminate Louis the eleventh from any other monarch, he oblig'd him to marry the princess Jane, his youngest daughter, though she was deformed in a great degree, and had not even received a decent education. She was besides only twelve years of age, and the duke only fourteen. This union was afterwards

princess, but not distinguished by any extraordinary endowments of person or mind. Though Louis treated her with external decency, yet he always regarded her as more attached to the interests of the house of Burgundy, to which she was nearly related, than to those of the crown of France. She was almost a captive during the latter part of his reign; and she appears to have submitted without the slightest struggle or murmur to the last will of Louis, by which he nominated his daughter the lady of Beaujeu to the regency. She died at the castle of Amboise, on the 1st December 1483, only three months after the king.

broken

broken by the duke of Orleans when he ascended the throne *.

1481.

Besides these instances of domestic tyranny, the people groaned under his oppressions. Numbers

* There are some circumstances so curious and extraordinary relative to this marriage, that I cannot help mentioning them. It seems that the king was fully convinc'd his daughter could bear no children, since in a letter of his to the Count de Dammartin still extant, and afterwards produced by Louis the twelfth on the trial relative to his divorce from Jane, he says, speaking of the future bride and her husband,—“ Qu'ils n'auroient pas beaucoup d'embaras à nourrir les enfans qui naitroient de leur union ; mais cependant, elle aura lieu, quelque chose qu'on en puisse dire.”

Louis the twelfth pretended that he never consummated the nuptials ; but this on many accounts is highly improbable, though admitted by pope Alexander the sixth, at the subsequent divorce. St. Gelais de Montlieu, in his history, expressly asserts the contrary : these are his words—“ C'est grand merveille de ce qu'on faisoit au duc d'Orleans, et les menaces qu'on lui faisoit s'il ne s'acquittoit de coucher avec la dite dame Jehanne. On ne le menaçoit de rien moins que de la vie ; et j'aurois grand honte de reciter la façon comme on usoient ceux qui étoient autour, tant hommes que femmes.”—In the course of the proceedings at Amboise after Louis the twelfth's accession, on the king's marriage, Jane when question'd, asserted in the most express and solemn manner, that the marriage had been consummated. She even mentions the place, time, and circumstances, which are very curious.—Being demanded by the king's proctor, whether she had not some natural defects unusual in her sex, she answer'd, “ I know that

H 2

“ I am

1481. bers of the nobility were carried about as wild beasts, confined in iron cages; a horrid invention unknown before this reign, and the frequency of which increased with the progress of his disorder. A third stroke of a similar nature with the two former, seemed to promise his

"I am neither so handsome, nor well shaped as the greater part of my sex; but I have no imperfection that renders me unfit for marriage." When asked afterwards, if she would submit to be inspected by midwives, she replied, "that she would consider of it, and act agreeably to the rules of the church."—The whole examination was in Latin.—Jane however refus'd, when press'd by the king, to permit of any inspection, alledging female modesty as an excuse; but offer'd to submit her cause to his own sense of honour, and to desist from any farther opposition, provided he would assert on oath that he had never consummated the marriage. Louis shewed some hesitation and reluctance to give this proof of his veracity; but the queen still insisting on it, he complied at length, and expressly denied whatever she had asserted. He likewise produc'd in his favour the testimony of his own mother the duchess dowager of Orleans, who had examin'd the queen, and had found her incapable of having issue. Salmon de Bombelle, physician to Louis the twelfth, was the last person who depos'd on this occasion; his evidence is the most satisfactory of any, and seems indisputably to prove the queen's incapacity for bearing children, tho' it does not make it equally clear that the marriage was never consummated.—Motives of public good and the benefit of the state, superadded to the unjustifiable compulsion made use of by Louis the eleventh to effect the alliance, seem however in a great measure to justify the proceedings of Louis the twelfth in this affair.

kingdom

LOUIS THE ELEVENTH.

101

kingdom a termination of its evils; yet he still surviv'd for new severities.

1481.

The death of Charles of Anjou titular king of Naples at this juncture, added Provence to the crown; and that of Mary of Burgundy, who died by a fall from her horse in hunting, during her pregnancy, open'd the way to a pacification between Louis and Maximilian, by the affiancing of his infant daughter Margaret with the Dauphin Charles*.

Decem-
ber.

1482.
May.

Edward the fourth expir'd much about the same time; and England by that event was once more plung'd into all those convulsions and civil broils, from which she had hardly begun to recover.

1483.
April.

* Comines says, that Mary died of a fever occasion'd by her accident. He does not assert that she was with child, but only says it was so reported. The horse on which she was mounted being unruly, flung her, and she had the misfortune to fall on a piece of wood, which it is said, fractured her thigh. Comines speaks in the highest terms of her character, conjugal fidelity, and amiable qualities of mind. The cotemporary authors assert, that her exquisite modesty and delicacy alone made the fall fatal; since she prefer'd death to the permitting a surgeon to set her thigh, which was broke.

Her subjects deeply regretted her loss. She had rendered herself universally beloved for her affability, liberality, and faithful attachment to her husband. Lord Rivers, brother to Elizabeth Woodville, Edward the fourth's queen, had been among the number of her suitors; but he was refused, as being of a rank too much beneath the prince's.

1483.

The concluding scene of Louis's life holds up one of the most awful pictures which can be presented to the imagination. That of Pygmalion, though heighten'd by the colours of Fénélon's rich and descriptive pen, is not more tremendous, or more affecting. He exhausted every power of medicine, or devotion, or artifice, to prolong a miserable existence. To inspire him with gaiety, the most beautiful country girls were brought to dance round his house, and bands of men who played on lutes accompanied them. To intercede with Heaven in his behalf, processions were ordered throughout the whole kingdom for his recovery; and public prayers offered to avert the Bize, a cold, piercing wind which incommoded him extremely. A vast collection of relics was brought, as if to secure him by their influence from the stroke of death; while his physician treated him with insult, and extorted from him great sums of money, which the king dared not to refuse him in his present circumstances*. It has even been pretended that a bath of infants blood was prepar'd

* His physician's name was Jacques Coſtier, a native of Poligny in Franche Comté. Conſcious of the ascendancy which he had gain'd, he tyranniz'd over Louis himſelf, and frequently ſpoke to him in a manner equally inſolent and arrogant.—“ I know,” ſaid he, “ your majeſty will ſend for me ſome morning to put me to death, as you
“ have

LOUIS THE ELEVENTH.

103

1483.

prepar'd for him, in the expectation that it would soften the acrimony of his scorbutic humours; but to this we may lend a very slender faith.

May.

After changing his place of residence many times, he sat down at the castle of Plessiz-les-Tours. The walls were covered with iron spikes; a guard of cross-bow men watched night and day, as if to secure him from invasion. He heard enemies in the passing wind. Every thing terrified and alarmed his guilty mind. Only one wicket admitted people into the castle, and scarce any one approach'd his person, except the Lady of Beaujeu his daughter, and her husband. During these dismal circumstances, he yet tried to persuade himself and others that he might live. In this flattering delusion, he sent

"have done others; but I vow to God you shall not survive it eight days."—Louis regarding him as the arbiter of his fate, neither dar'd to reply to him, or to refuse him any demands he made, however exorbitant. Coëtier's salary was no less than ten thousand crowns a month, and the donations which he receiv'd from the king's terrors, almost exceed belief. In eight months he was paid ninety-eight thousand crowns; and as the king approach'd nearer to his end, these marks of his weakness and apprehension were encreased.—Under the ensuing reign, Coëtier was call'd to answer for the sums he had receiv'd; but he escap'd any further enquiry by the payment of fifty thousand crowns.—These particulars are all enumerated by Comines.

H 4

into

1483. into Italy to seek a Calabrian hermit, eminent for sanctity, named Francisco de Paolo. He threw himself on his knees before this monk at his arrival, besought with humble supplications his interest with the Deity for the prolongation of his life, built him two convents as proofs of his zeal, and set no bounds to his adulation and respect for the supposed minister of Heaven *.

Finding

* Comines and Du Clos have given the most minute relation of the king's last illness and continual terrors. Even fancy can hardly figure a more terrible and striking lesson, than it holds up to the mind.—Four hundred archers kept guard, and forty were constantly watching under arms, with strict orders to fire upon any persons who approached too near the castle. All who entered, underwent a strict search. Louis alternately regarded his son as the object of his affection and suspicion. He daily chang'd his domestics, and being desirous to conceal his apprehensions, he said that nature took delight in change. To employ continually the attention of foreigners, and give an idea of his vigorous state of mind, he caus'd horses, dogs, and all sorts of curious or uncommon animals, to be purchased and brought out of other countries, tho' he did not even look at them when they were arrived. He would frequently shew himself in a balcony, magnificently dress'd, and disappear in an instant, that the spectators might not remark the manifest alteration in his countenance and features, caus'd by his illness.—He sought from every quarter, for remedies or prayers. He caus'd himself to be re-anointed with the holy oil used at the coronation of the kings of France, which was brought from Rheims for that purpose. The pope dispatch'd Grimaldi his steward, with abundance of relics to the king.

—On

1483.

Finding however the inevitable hour of fate advance, and unable longer to turn his eyes from the survey of it, he sent for Charles his son from Amboise, and gave him some salutary advice, exactly opposite to the uniform tenor of all his own conduct—to cherish the princes of the blood; to govern by the advice of his nobles; not to controvert the established laws; and to diminish the exorbitant imposts with which he had burden'd his subjects. This was the concluding act of his life: he expir'd some days after*.

30th
August.

Those who are conversant with the great works

—On the 25th of August, he had so severe a fainting fit, that he was believ'd for some time to be dead, and the news of his suppos'd decease was sent to Paris. He again recover'd, but remain'd so low and exhausted, that it was evident he could not long survive. Louis seem'd fully conscious of his approaching end. He sent the Seigneur de Beaujeu to Amboise, to pay his duties to the young king, as he then term'd him; and afterwards dispatch'd the chancellor to him, with the seals, his hounds, hawks, and part of his guard; commanding all those about him to be faithful to their new master.

* When Louis approach'd his last moments, those around his bed thought it requisite to inform him that he must prepare for death. His confessor more peculiarly apprehended it his duty to bid him dedicate the short time he had left, to the care of his salvation; but as his majesty had often warn'd them never to pronounce to him the cruel word, death, even tho' they saw him in extremity, they hesitated long

1483. works of antiquity, will be strikingly reminded on the perusal of this story, of the description of Tiberius's exit, as related by Tacitus. It seems marked with all the same strokes of character.

long before any one would venture to announce to him so unpleasing a sentence.—At length, Olivier Le Daim, one of his chief favourites took the office on himself, and in presence of Francisco de Paolo, Costier his physician, and some other persons, said to him, “Sire, it becomes us to discharge our duty towards you. Place no farther confidence in this holy man, or in any thing else. Think only of your conscience, for all is over with you, and there is no remedy left.”—The king betray'd no marks of terror at this denunciation, but answer'd, “I hope that God will assist me, for perhaps I am not so ill as you imagine.” He still turn'd his thoughts on the Dauphin, and the kingdom, and gave many directions to guide the ministers of the future sovereign. He advis'd them not to molest the duke of Bretagne, to lay aside all thoughts of regaining Calais from the king of England, and to preserve the tranquillity of the state. He spoke of the Count de St. Pol and the duke of Nemours, and declar'd that he repented only of having put one of them to death, meaning the latter.—Louis then receiv'd the sacraments and absolution, repeating the responses to every prayer. He lastly gave orders about his funeral, and nam'd the persons who should attend his corpse. When in extremity he continued to repeat, “Our Lady of Embrun, my good mistress, assist me!—*Misericordias Domini in æternum cantabo.*”—He said more than once, that he hop'd, from the peculiar devotion he had always born the Virgin, she would preserve him till Saturday. A circumstance much notic'd, because confirm'd by the event! He expir'd on Saturday about seven o'clock in the evening, on the 30th of August.

“—Jam

—“ Jam Tiberium corpus, jam vires, nondum
 “ dissimulatio deserebat. Idem animi rigor, fer- 1483.
 “ mone ac vultu intentus, quæsitâ interdum co-
 “ mitate, quamvis manifestam defectionem te-
 “ gebat; mutatisque sæpius locis, tandem apud
 “ promontorium Miseni confedit.”

After so minute and diffuse a narration of Louis the eleventh's conduct and death, it will be needless to draw the character of the king with equal accuracy. The principal strokes of it cannot be mistaken. His virtues, if he can be said to have possess'd any, were those of policy and artifice; his vices, of disposition and the heart. Even his understanding, tho' clear, sagacious, and discerning, was frequently so fine and subtle, that it misled him by its own cunning, and overshot his purposes. France however continued to rise in the scale of empire. Charles the seventh laid the foundation of this aggrandisement, by his expulsion of the English. Louis added Burgundy, Artois, and Provence to the crown. Only Bretagne remained, of the great fiefs, unannexed.

The malignant and unamiable character of Louis did not prevent him from having some gallantries. History has preserved the names of several successive mistresses to whom he was attach'd. Margaret de Sassenage is the most known and celebrated: she died before his accession to the crown; but we never find that
 any

1483. any of them influenced the king, or assumed the least command over affairs of state. By his first wife, the princess Margaret of Scotland, he had no issue; nor does it appear that he even consummated the marriage, or cohabited with her, on account of some secret defect in her person*. His queen, Charlotte of Savoy, an amiable princess, only survived him three months.

I have

* Margaret was daughter to James the first, and only eleven years old when married in 1436, to Louis, then Dauphin. The English, after vainly endeavouring by negotiation to prevent the alliance between the crowns of France and Scotland, fitted out a fleet to intercept the princess on her passage; but she escaped this danger, and landed, tho' with great difficulty at La Rochelle, from whence she was conducted to Tours, where the nuptials were celebrated. What was the peculiar object of her husband's disgust and aversion, seems cover'd up very mysteriously, and is hard to ascertain. Most of the cotemporary authors assert, that her breath was very disagreeable, and from that cause arose his dislike to her. Comines only says, Louis never loved her, without assigning the reason.—She was an accomplish'd princess in other respects, and protected letters. A singular anecdote is related of her, strongly corroborating this part of her character.

Passing accidentally through an apartment where Alain Chartier, the most brilliant genius but the ugliest man of his age, lay asleep, she advanc'd up to him and kissed him. Her ladies reproaching her by their looks for this seeming violation of female modesty; "It was not the man" said she, "whom I kissed, but the mouth from whence have" proceeded so many elevated sentiments."

She

I have permitted myself to run into a greater length on this reign, than I generally intend—possibly greater than was requisite. I mean more to interest, than instruct; and this end can only be attained by an enumeration of those seemingly trifling circumstances, which yet often display the picture of human nature with more fidelity, than the greater actions of the monarch, obscured by the veil of policy. 1483.

She died at Chalons-sur-Marne, about eight years after her marriage, in 1444, without issue; and, as the French authors inform us, of grief on account of the imputations thrown upon her honour. Du Clos, in his history of Louis the eleventh, says that Margaret walking in very sultry weather from the castle of Sarry near Chalons, to the church of Notre Dame de l'Epine, was seiz'd with a pleurisy, which being added to her grief, soon carried her off. He lavishes the highest encomiums on her qualities and accomplishments, personal and intellectual.

CHAPTER THE FOURTH.

Accession of Charles the eighth.—Character of the regent, Anne, lady of Beaujeu.—Her administration.—Attempts on the duchy of Bretagne.—The duke of Orleans's intrigues and flight.—Battle of St. Aubin du Cormier.—His imprisonment.—Marriage of Anne of Bretagne to the king.—The duchy united to the crown.—Termination of the regency.—Charles's character.—He is inflamed with schemes of conquest.—Attack on the kingdom of Naples.—Romantic expedition.—His march.—Uninterrupted train of victory.—Coronation.—Return.—Battle of Fornoua.—Charles abandons himself to pleasures.—Naples lost.—New plans of invasion.—Renounced.—The king's change, and sudden death.—Circumstances of it.—Character.

1483.

THE age of Charles the eighth at his accession to the crown, was of that critical nature, which render'd it difficult to provide for the government. He might have been reputed of age without any considerable violence done to the forms of the monarchy, since he had nearly completed his fourteenth year ;—but the meanness of his education, the confinement to which

which he had always been subjected, and his feeble constitution, delicate and sickly, seemed to demand some abler and more experienced conductor for the state. The late king, whose views were ever piercing and active, had foreseen this necessity, and had not failed to apply to it a remedy. In his expiring moments he nominated Anne, his eldest daughter, to the first charge of the government, though with the title, not of regent, but of governess. 1483.

The princess, altho' in early youth, not having passed her twenty-second year, had received from nature all the qualities requisite for this high office. She had a genius equal to her father's; more uniformity of conduct, and greater magnanimity. Her judgment was sound, without any mixture of that perfidious duplicity which debas'd the understanding of Louis. Though vindictive, not cruel; though tenacious of her dignity, not violent or imperious. Led aside by no inferior passions, she felt her capacity for administration, and sacrificed sovereignly to that object. Mistress of an eloquence and address the most refin'd, she knew how to possess, and to retain the authority delegated to her.—Such are the colours under which the cotemporary writers have transmitted to us her character; and we find them fully displayed during the short but vigorous period,

1483.

period, when she possess'd the supreme command of affairs *.

But though talents so various and exalted appeared to justify the confidence reposed in her by Louis the eleventh, equity and antient usage seemed to call Louis duke of Orleans to the helm of state. His rank, as first prince of the blood, and even presumptive heir to the crown, rendered his claim incontrovertible, if his youth (for he was but twenty years of age,) did not

* Anne of France, daughter to Louis the eleventh, was born in 1461. Her father, actuated by that jealous and capricious policy which always characterised his conduct, married her to Peter of Bourbon, Sire de Beaujeu, and younger brother of the duke of Bourbon. He was, it is true, a prince of the blood royal, but of a very remote and collateral branch; nor was he either endow'd by nature with any superior talents, or by fortune with ample possessions. These deficiencies were however his principal recommendations to Louis, who did not wish to aggrandize the family of Bourbon.—As the king approached towards the termination of his life and reign, he became more attach'd to his daughter Anne, and to her husband. They alone had the free and constant permission to enter the castle of Plaisis-les-Tours, where he resided. Louis constituted his son-in-law lieutenant-general of the kingdom only a short time before his death; and by his last will he appointed the lady of Beaujeu governess of the kingdom, to the exclusion of every other person allied to the crown.—She was the first princess of France, since the accession of the family of Valois, who had been invested with so high an office. It must be allow'd that her superior qualities of mind justified the choice made by Louis the eleventh.

diminish

1483.

diminish its force and validity. Anne knew how to avail herself of this circumstance; and, by the means of that dexterity and management which she so eminently possess'd, secur'd to herself, notwithstanding the duke's opposition, the post with which she had been invested by her father.

Her first acts were of the most ingratiating and popular nature. Several creatures, rather than ministers of the late king, who had abused their favour by the commission of the greatest crimes, she surrender'd up to public punishment*. She revok'd the donations which his superstition and his terrors of approaching death had induced him to make to several convents and

* Among the most celebrated and odious of these victims to public justice, was Olivier le Diable. He was a native of Thielt in Flanders, and became, from the inferior station of barber to Louis the eleventh, one of his chief favourites and ministers. He chang'd his name to that of Le Daim, under which title he is commonly known in history. Elated by the royal protection, he proceeded to many acts of insolence; and the king having conferr'd on him the lands of Meulant, he assumed the name of Count de Meulant. Throughout the course of that sanguinary reign, he was the principal instrument of Louis's tyranny, and the inventor of various modes of torture which were inflicted on the state criminals confined or executed by order of that monarch.—Olivier le Dain, together with his servant and assistant Daniel, were both hanged by sentence of the parliament.—Jean Doyac, another of the detestable ministers of Louis

1483. and religious orders; and conciliated universal favour by a mild and equal government. These were however only the inferiour operations of the cabinet. Anne, more daring and intrepid than her father, saw that the favourable moment was at hand to re-unite the province of Bretagne to the crown of France; nor was she deterred from the prosecution of her plan, by the numerous obstacles which presented themselves.

1484. Francis the second, duke of Bretagne, sunk into years and imbecility, had resign'd all power into the hands of Landais, whom an insinuating and flexible genius, calculated to rise in courts, had promoted from a low mechanical occupation, to the disposal of all his master's favour. The nobility of Bretagne, incensed at so unworthy a choice, and irritated by the acts of oppression and violence which he committed,

the eleventh, was involved in the punishment inflicted on the two first. This man, who was a native of Auvergne, and of the lowest extraction, had been made governor of that province, where he had committed numerous acts of public violence and rapacity. His sentence was equally singular and rigorous. He was condemn'd, after being whipt in all the open places or squares of Paris, to have one of his ears cut off, and his tongue pierced thro' with a hot iron; thence to be conducted to his native city Montferrand, where, after being whipt, his other ear was to be cut off. The sentence was fully and rigorously executed. The estates and effects of the three criminals were confiscated to the crown.

endeavoured

endeavoured to ruin him; but the duke, attach'd to his favourite, shelter'd him from their indignation. Landais, not content with an escape, sought for revenge; he menac'd his enemies, and even proceeded to the execution of his threats. Necessity, united to the desire of vengeance, forced the nobles to recur for protection to the ministry of France; and Anne, who only waited for the application, was ready to grant them the requested assistance, when some opposition which she met with from another quarter, compelled her to turn her views that way and relinquish for an instant, this her favourite project.

1484.

Though the superiour address and policy of his rival, had obliged the duke of Orleans to acquiesce in her nomination to the first post in the state, yet the disappointment of his ambition in so important a struggle, had naturally tended to create in him the strongest animosity towards her; and his temper being open and incapable of disguise, he was not studious to conceal it. An incident small in itself, but attended with very important consequences, display'd his resentment, and hastened the reduction of Bretagne.

While the court resided at Melun, the duke of Orleans and some other young noblemen were engaged in a party at tennis, of which the king and his sister were spectators; and a dispute

1485.

1485.

arising relative to a stroke which was to decide the game, it was referred to them. Madame de Beaujeu did not hesitate to give it against the duke, who, incens'd at what he apprehended to be an act of great injustice, and the result of personal enmity, was so imprudent as to say in a tone of voice by no means inaudible, "*Que quiconque l'avoit condamné, si c'étoit un homme, il en avoit menti; et si c'étoit une femme, que c'étoit une putaine.*"—This affront, which was of the grossest nature, became unpardonable, when offered to a person of that high dignity, and in the royal presence. Anne, mistress of her resentment, restrain'd it so far as not to order his immediate arrest; but she procur'd from the council an order for that purpose, which would have been carried directly into execution, if the duke had not secur'd himself by flight, and assembled his partizans and vassals for his defence: all resistance was, however, vain. She besieged him in the castle of Beaugency on the Loire; reduc'd him to terms of absolute submission; and left him no other authority than that which his rank alone procured him.

Louis, though impatient of a yoke so severe, was not in a condition to shake it off; he even affected an entire acquiescence; but Anne, jealous and vigilant, having receiv'd information that he had enter'd into negotiations with the duke

duke of Bretagne, sent him an order to repair instantly to the king; and, on his attempting by a messenger to excuse himself on some frivolous pretexts, commanded the Marechal de Gié to conduct him to her. The duke of Orleans obeyed therefore, and began his journey; but having gone out the next morning, under pretence of trying some new falcons, he gallop'd without stopping to Fontevraud in Anjou, of which his sister was abbess, escap'd a second time, and gained the territories of his ally Francis; who promis'd him his daughter Anne, heiress to the duchy in marriage, and enter'd into the closest connections with him.

1486.

The nobility of Bretagne, who had incens'd their prince by the destruction and death of his favourite Landais *, apprehensive of a severe chastisement from this accession of strength, implored

1487.

* Peter Landais was a native of Vitre in Bretagne, and in no higher occupation of life than that of a journeyman taylor. As such he had access to the person of the duke, and became gradually acceptable to him. He gained an unlimited ascendant over his master's mind, by being subservient to all his pleasures, and in particular by procuring for him the most beautiful women. Grown insolent from the degree of favour to which he had attained, he irritated the nobility by every species of vexation and cruelty. Chauvin, chancellor of the duchy of Bretagne, and who was infinitely beloved not only by the people but even by Francis himself, he put to death in prison, with every circumstance

1487. plored protection from the Lady of Beaujeu. She marched instantly a considerable army to their assistance; and, after several inferior advantages, gained the celebrated battle of St. Aubin du Cormier, which decided the contest. The duke of Orleans, who fought on foot, and behaved with distinguished courage, was taken prisoner. After a short confinement at the castle of Lusignan in Poictou, he was conducted to Bourges, where he remained a captive in the great tower above two years.

1488.
July.

The successes of the French arms obliged the lady of Beaujeu to throw aside the mask, and to declare openly to the Breton nobility, who pressed her to withdraw her troops, that this was not the time. An avowal so plainly declaring her intention to retain the duchy, and annex it for ever to the crown of France, re-united every disaffected person, and restored to the duke his rebellious nobility. But Francis, overcome with infirmities, and hurt by a fall from his horse, died at this juncture; and left his daughter Anne, scarce thirteen years of age, surrounded with dangers and enemies.

1488.
Septem-
ber.

capable of rendering the crime more detestable. The nobles, driven to despair by these continued acts of violence, united for his destruction; and after missing their blow more than once, at length succeeded. They made themselves masters of his person, and hung him publicly on the 19th July 1485.

New

New factions, and new competitors arose for this rich alliance. — Alain, Seigneur d'Albret had several partizans. Maximilian, king of the Romans, who had been married to Mary of Burgundy, aspired to her hand; nor was the duke of Orleans's party, if he had not been detained a prisoner, yet extinct. The young princess decided in favour of the king of the Romans, and the marriage was not only solemnized by proxy, but attended with a singular and curious ceremony; that of John de Chalons, Count de Nassau introducing his naked leg into the bed of the bride, as representing the person of Maximilian. Had he come himself in person as every principle of policy dictated, the union would have been rendered indissoluble; but the abject, and almost incredible parsimony of the emperor Frederic the third his father, who refused him the inconsiderable sum of two thousand crowns on this great occasion, deprived him of so important an acquisition.

1488.

1489.

1489
Decem-
ber

1489

and 90.

The French council, fearing lest the prize should be lost amid so many intrigues and delays, determined to send back the princess Margaret of Austria, daughter of Maximilian, to whom the king had been long betrothed, and to demand Anne of Bretagne for Charles the eighth; but though she was pressed by the most urgent necessity, and invested by the forces of

1489
and 90.

the sovereign who courted her alliance, she yet disdain'd to violate the faith she had once pledged; and refused for a long time, with a noble perseverance, to accept any husband except him whom she had already chosen. Attacked however on every side, and even entreated to yield by the duke of Orleans himself, whom Charles took from prison, and sent to urge his suit; and on the other hand, disgusted by the coldness of the king of the Romans, who did not manifest the anxiety or impatience which such a match might justly excite, the young duchess yielded at length, and her nuptials with the king were celebrated at Langeais in Touraine *. Maximilian exclaimed loudly against this infringement of the most solemn engagements; but the evil was without remedy, and the last great sief swallowed up in the dominions of France.

1491.
Decem-
ber.

Henry

* Anne of Bretagne, so famous in the annals of France, was born at Nantes, in January 1476. She was promised in marriage, while yet in her infancy, to Edward Prince of Wales, son to Edward the fourth of England, and who afterwards was the unfortunate Edward the fifth; but his premature death prevented the completion of this engagement. Her education was committed by her father Francis the second, to the care of Francoise de Dinant, lady of Laval, who made her mistress of all the accomplishments which that unletter'd age permitted. Her person, though not without defects, was agreeable, and her understanding masculine and strong

1492.

October.

Henry the seventh of England, who had acted from motives of avarice, a part similar to that which Edward the fourth had taken in the affairs of Mary of Burgundy, rather affected to make, than really made, an effort for the preservation of the duchy. He landed at Calais; but was soon induc'd to retire into his own dominions, by a considerable sum of money; an argument irresistible with a prince of his character!

With the important acquisition of Bretagne, may be said to have terminated the authority of Anne, lady of Beaujeu. Her credit and

strong beyond her years.—The court of Bretagne was divided into several factions, who espoused the various pretenders to her hand. The Marechal de Rieux, and the lady of Laval were of the party and in the interests of the Seigneur d'Albret; but that nobleman was already forty years of age, and had eight legitimate, and six natural children. Anne herself refus'd to accomplish this engagement, though it had been made by her father previous to his death.

Her own inclinations led her to prefer the duke of Orleans; but he was already married, and it was by no means certain that the dissolution of his marriage could be obtain'd; added to which, that prince was a prisoner in the tower of Bourges.—Necessity rather than choice directed her preference of Maximilian; and the ceremony of her marriage with him was celebrated by proxy, in the month of March 1490. The poverty and the delays of Maximilian rendered void these nuptials, and compelled the reluctant princess to give her hand to Charles the eighth.

influence

1492. influence had already begun to diminish *. The young king, who approach'd to years of manhood, manifested too great an impatience of controul, to be longer held in subjection; and his character expanding with his age, render'd him known to his people. No resemblance of

* Anne became duchess of Bourbon, by the death of her husband's elder brother John duke of Bourbon, who died without issue in the month of April 1488. The influence which Anne of Bretagne acquired over the mind of her husband, tended to diminish that of the lady of Beaujeu; yet she always continued to preserve a rank in the councils of state, during the reign of her brother Charles the eighth. She ventur'd, previous to his departure on the expedition to Naples, to give him the strongest admonitions and exhortations respecting the pleasures in which he too wantonly indulged himself, and which it is probable accelerated his end. On the king's final departure for Italy, Peter de Beaujeu, duke of Bourbon, her husband, was left regent; but as his very limited talents rendered him incapable of sustaining the weight of public affairs, Anne in reality exercised the supreme power. She is said to have strongly oppos'd the king's taking on him the command of the army in person.—Under the reign of Louis the twelfth, to whom when Duke of Orleans, she had been a declared enemy, she lived retired and almost forgotten. The duke of Bourbon, her husband, died in 1503. Anne herself survived him many years, and expired at the castle of Chantelle in Auvergne, in November 1422, under the reign of Francis the first. She left only one child, Susanna, heiress to the vast possessions of the family of Bourbon, and who was married to the celebrated and unfortunate Charles of Montpensier, constable of Bourbon, her cousin, to whom she brought her rich domains in dowry.

his

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1492.

his father Louis appeared in Charles. Lively and brilliant, but of feeble judgment, he possessed a temper the most amiable and gentle, and a heart which even power could not corrupt to the commission of a crime. Fond of pleasure, tho' easily inflamed with the love of glory, he sacrificed alternately to both; and resembled his grandfather Charles the seventh, in the easy and rapid transitions he made from one to the other.

During the interval of tranquillity and peace which succeeded to the reduction of Bretagne, the courtiers, desirous of ingratiating themselves with their sovereign, began first to dazzle his imagination with ideas of fame and conquest. The pretensions which, as heir to the house of Anjou, he inherited on the kingdom of Naples, formed a plausible and flattering subject to a youthful mind. Charles possessed the personal courage requisite for military exploits, and an ardent thirst of glory. Ludovico Sforza, surnamed the Moor, brother to the celebrated Francisco Sforza, and uncle to the reigning duke of Milan Galeazzo, invited and importuned him, from self-interested motives, to take possession of his right. Upon the first report of such an intention, Ferdinand the first, who reigned in Naples, and who had passed his seventieth year, sent an embassy to the king of the most submissive nature, offering to pay homage,

1492
and 93.

mage, and an annual tribute of fifty thousand crowns. These proposals, which ought to have been accepted, were instantly refused; and the old king, terrified at the threaten'd invasion, and unable to avert it, died soon after of a disorder occasion'd by grief and terror *.

The passion for war having once gained possession of the young monarch, no arguments or motives of policy could induce him to relinquish

* Ferdinand the first, king of Naples, was a natural son of Alfonso the fifth, king of Arragon and Naples, surnam'd the Wise and the Magnanimous. Alfonso had been called to the succession of the kingdom by Jane the second, last queen of Naples of the first house of Anjou; but having afterwards rebell'd against that princess, she attempted to revoke her donation, and to substitute Louis the third of Anjou in his place. Alfonso, however, establish'd himself in the dominions originally bequeathed to him, and left them to his son Ferdinand, who was legitimated by Pope Eugene the fourth, and began his reign in 1458. Ferdinand was twice dispossest'd of his dominions by the princes of the house of Anjou, and as often recovered them by the protection and assistance of the Holy See. Scanderbeg, so renown'd in the wars of Greece, pass'd over into Sicily to defend him against the attempts of those princes. Though Comines and the other French historians speak of Ferdinand as so detestable a prince, it does not appear that he was deficient in policy or capacity. His apprehensions of the consequences of the French invasion, and his inability to avert so great a calamity, hastened his end, by bringing on him an apoplectic seizure, of which he died in January 1494, some months previous to the departure of Charles the eighth for the conquest of Naples.

his

his intention. In vain did his sister the lady of Beaujeu oppose so rash and ill-concerted an enterprize: she had lost much of her former influence, and was no longer heard. With such warmth was this injudicious determination adopted, that even the most important and certain acquisitions were renounced, for a contingent and distant crown. The provinces of Roussillon and Cerdagne, of which Louis the eleventh had possessed himself during the troubles in Spain by an unwearied and masterly policy, and which he had purchased of John the second king of Arragon, for three hundred thousand crowns, were ceded to Ferdinand the Catholic, his successor, only to obtain his neutrality during the attack on Naples. None of the absurd and legendary adventures of chivalry were ever more romantic, or undertaken in greater contradiction to reason and policy, than this of Charles. Destitute of pecuniary resources, without any certain or honourable ally, and with a handful of troops courageous and gallant, but unaccustomed to the fatigues of long or disastrous campaigns, he undertook to march over the Alps and Apennines to the extremity of Italy, through the dominions of the pope and the republic of Florence, who had openly declared against him.

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and 93.

After a number of delays, unavoidable at the commencement of such an enterprize, Charles began his march. While he waited at Ast in

1494.
August.

1494.

Piedmont for his artillery, which was obliged to be dragged over the mountains, he was seized with the small-pox, from which he recover'd after the most imminent danger of his life. At Turin he was necessitated to borrow all the rings and jewels of the duchess of Savoy, as he did at Casal those of the Marchioness of Montferrat, to supply the necessary expences of the war *. Ludovico Sforza met him at Vigeve, but quitted him in a few days, to take possession of the duchy of Milan, which he seized on the death of Galeazzo his nephew, though that prince had left an infant son. If Charles had pursued the dictates of sound policy, he should himself have conquer'd Milan, which belonged of right to the family of Orleans;

* Comines, who was sent by Charles the eighth to Venice as his ambassador to that republic, previous to the king's entrance into Italy, has given the most faithful narration of this celebrated expedition. It long hung in suspense, totally laid aside on one day, and resumed on the following. Comines expressly says, that the duke and duchess of Bourbon endeavoured by every possible means to prevent it. No funds were provided for the payment of the forces. Fifty thousand ducats were procured from a merchant of Milan, by the intervention of Ludovico Sforza. A hundred thousand livres were advanced at an exorbitant interest by the bank of Genoa. Twelve thousand ducats were received, on depositing as security the jewels of the duchess of Savoy; and as many more, for the jewels of the Marchioness of Montferrat. Such were the scanty and precarious resources on which depended the prosecution of the invasion of Naples.

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but, intoxicated with the expected conquest of Naples, he continued his progress.

1494.

The Florentines, who aspired to freedom, expelled Pietro de Medecis on Charles's approach to the frontiers of Tuscany, and received the king in military triumph into their city. Clad in complete armour, mounted on horseback, his lance couched, and his vizor lower'd, he enter'd Florence as a conqueror. Alexander the sixth, the reigning pontiff, retir'd on this intelligence into the castle of St. Angelo, after he had commanded the gates of Rome to be thrown open; and Charles, victorious without a blow, took possession of the city as if by right of conquest, and disposed of his troops in the different quarters of it.—The pope soon capitulated; and after a treaty such as the necessity of his affairs reduced him to conclude, the French army quitted Rome, and resumed its march.—Meanwhile all was confusion and affright at Naples. Alfonso the second, who had succeeded his father in the throne, yielding to terrors the most unmanly and almost inconceivable, resigned the sceptre to young Ferdinand his son, and fled into a monastery at Messina in Sicily *. The new king

Novem-
ber.

Decem-
ber.

1495.

* In the history of mankind there scarce exists an instance of so base and unmanly a desertion of all the duties of a sovereign, as in the conduct of Alfonso the second, king of Naples, when invaded by Charles the eighth. It was the more

1495. king was defeated in a slight engagement which he hazarded, and was oblig'd to shelter himself in the isle of Ischia. Naples instantly received the

more extraordinary, as previous to that æra he had merited the character of an active, brave, and warlike prince. Comines expressly asserts this, tho' he brands him with every epithet of ignominy and contempt, for his dastardly dereliction of the throne and kingdom. Neither Alfonso nor his son Ferdinand the second could ever be induced, during the life of the old king Ferdinand the first, to believe that the threatened invasion of the French would in reality take place. They were even accustomed to speak of it in terms of ridicule and menace, and to declare that they would come to the foot of the Alps, to find out, and to give battle to the king of France.—Comines enumerates many acts of violence and tyranny, which Alfonso had committed; and peculiarly, his putting to death twenty-six of the principal Neapolitan nobility during his short reign, who had been detained in prison by his father Ferdinand for a number of years. "No sooner," adds that historian, "was the young duke of Calabria, Ferdinand, returned to Naples with the forces which he had commanded against Charles, than his father Alfonso judged himself no longer worthy to retain the crown, on account of his oppressions. He, therefore, determin'd to crown his son, which resolution he executed immediately; and Ferdinand made a public procession on horseback through the principal streets, accompanied by his uncle Frederic, the cardinal of Genoa, the ambassadors and grandees."

If we may credit all the contemporary historians, Alfonso's panic rose to a degree approaching frenzy. Such were his fears, that though the French army was sixty leagues

the conqueror ; the castles held out a very short 1495.
time ;

leagues distant, he apprehended he saw them in the streets of Naples, and that the very walls, trees, and stones cried out, "France!" The queen-dowager, his mother-in-law imploring him only to remain three days, which were wanting to complete a year from his accession to the crown, he refused ; and even threatened, if he was longer detained against his inclination, to throw himself from the windows of the palace. After having caused his son Ferdinand to be solemnly crown'd, he embark'd on board a vessel for Messina, carrying with him all sorts of wines, and seeds for his gardens, to both which pleasures he was immoderately attached. He had likewise some jewels, and a small sum of money. Landing in Sicily, he retired into a convent at Messina ; and abandoning himself to superstitious and monastic austerities, soon contracted a disorder of which he died, within a year from Charles the eighth's invasion of Naples.

Comines describes him as a monster of impiety and cruelty. Some circumstances of his oppressions and enormities, which he enumerates, are very singular. "Both himself and his father Ferdinand," says he, "were accustomed to deliver out hogs to the people to fatten, and if any of them died, they were obliged to repay the king. They bought up all the oil in Apulia, as well as the wheat, before it was ripe, and at a very inferior price, which, they afterwards compelled their subjects to purchase at an extravagant rate. They took the finest horses of the nobility, and retained them by force. Even their wives were not sacred or secure from their violence. They indulged themselves in the commission of every species of lasciviousness and barbarity : Ferdinand sold the bishopric of Tarento to a Jew for thirteen thousand ducats.

K

"They

1495. time; and of the whole kingdom, only Brindisi,
Reggio,

“ They gave abbies to their falconers, under the tenure of
 “ maintaining out of the ecclesiastical lands a number of
 “ falcons, and keepers for those birds, at their own ex-
 “ pence.” Comines, with a sort of sacred horror, sums
 up the list of his iniquities, by declaring, “ that Alfonso
 “ never kept Lent, or even pretended to do so; and would
 “ neither go to confession, nor receive the sacrament.” These
 were the most flagitious excesses of which the human mind
 could conceive an idea, in the fifteenth century, and seem-
 ed to eclipse all his other crimes. It may be doubted if the
 vices of these princes were not much exaggerated.—Gian-
 none speaks in very different terms of Ferdinand the first, from
 the language of Philip de Comines, and the French his-
 torians. He says, that his prudence, his wife and tempe-
 rate policy, together with his love of letters, and protection
 of learned men, rendered him one of the greatest sovereigns
 of his time. He deploras his death as a calamity to his fa-
 mily, to Naples, and to Italy in general. “ Had he lived,
 “ says Giannone, it cannot be doubted that he would have
 “ defeated the enterprize of Charles the eighth.” He re-
 lates the circumstances of Ferdinand’s illness and death,
 nearly as Comines and Guicciardini have done.—“ While,”
 says he, “ the king was occupied in endeavouring to put
 “ the army in a state to receive so powerful an enemy as
 “ was now approaching, the agitation and uneasiness of his
 “ mind resulting from his incapacity to avert so great an
 “ impending calamity, brought on him a catarrh, to which
 “ being added a fever, he breathed his last on the fourteenth
 “ day of his illness, at Naples, on the 25th January 1495,
 “ more overcome by the anxiety of his mind, than by his
 “ advanced age.”—Of Alfonso the second, it must be
 confess’d

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Reggio, and Gallipoli continued to declare for Ferdinand *. 1495.
February.

Dazzled with so extraordinary a blaze of glory, Charles already meditated the attack of Constantinople, and the subversion of the Ottoman man

confess'd that Giannone speaks differently. He allows, that he had alienated the affections of a great part of the Neapolitan nobility by his haughtiness and severities; that he was, previous to the expedition of Charles the eighth, altogether addicted to the love of arms; and that he did not extend that princely protection to men of letters, which had distinguished his father Ferdinand. Yet he represents him as a magnificent and able monarch.

The circumstances of his flight from Naples agree in general with those related by Comines. "Alfonso landed," says Giannone, "at Mazzara in Sicily, an estate belonging to the queen dowager his mother-in-law, which had been given her by Ferdinand king of Arragon, her brother; from thence he went soon after to Messina, where he immediately betook himself to a monastic life; and had he lived, his intentions were to have become a monk in the convent of Valenza in Sicily. But he was attack'd with the gravel to so violent a degree, as to put an end to his life within ten months from his leaving Naples, on the 19th November 1495."

* Ferdinand, on his arrival at Naples, finding that the inhabitants of that capital, as well as those of Averfa and Capua were ready to revolt, and had even already sent delegates to offer their submission to Charles the eighth, convoked a number of the nobility and people in the great square of the Castel Nuovo. He then released them from their oath and homage so recently taken to him, and even recommended to them to make conditions with the French monarch.

1495. man empire. Every thing yielded to his arms; and during so long and difficult a march, scarce an enemy had appeared to oppose his passage. —But amidst this train of prosperity, he did not advert to the gathering storm. Abandoning himself to the excesses of youth, and flush'd with conquest, no steps were taken to secure the dominions he had acquired. Banquets and masquerades succeeded each other; and to so great a degree of neglect was his negligence carried, that troops were not even sent to receive the places which submitted, and acknowledged the French monarch.

The great powers of Europe, who had hitherto beheld unmoved this rapid conquest and subver-

monarch. The affection which Ferdinand express'd for his subjects in this disastrous crisis, affected them strongly in his favour; but such was the hatred of the people and of the nobility to his father Alfonso, that nothing could arrest their violence. A tumult arose, and even in the royal presence the people began to plunder his stables. Ferdinand, therefore quitting Naples, went instantly on board his galleys, which were waiting for him in the port, accompanied only by his uncle Frederic, the queen dowager, widow of Ferdinand the first, and her daughter Joanna, together with a few followers. He made sail for the island of Ischia, and as he looked back at the city of Naples which he had just been compell'd to abandon, he often repeated with a loud voice a quotation from the Psalms, "*Nisi Dominus custodieret civitatem, frustra vigilat qui custodit eam.*"—These particulars are all collected from Guicciardini and Giannone.

sion of Italy, began to awaken from their inaction. 1495.

A league was made between Pope Alexander the sixth, the republic of Venice, the emperor Maximilian, the archduke Philip his son, and Ferdinand king of Arragon: even the perfidious Sforza, duke of Milan, violating the ties of gratitude and honour, acceded to this powerful confederacy.

It became necessary for Charles to think of making a retreat. He determin'd on it, after having previously made a triumphal entry into the capital of his new kingdom, dressed in the imperial ornaments, with a globe in his right hand, and a sceptre in his left; while a canopy was supported over him by the first nobility of the country, and all the people cried, "Long live " the most august emperor!"—This ostentatious ceremony being perform'd, he quitted Naples; and passing again through the papal territories, was so imprudent as to lose twelve or fifteen days at Pisa and Sienna, during which time the great confederate army assembled. Louis duke of Orleans, who ought to have led eight or nine thousand men to the assistance of his sovereign, had engaged in an attempt against Ludovico Sforza; and having surpris'd the city of Novarra in the Milanese, was afterwards blocked up in it.

May.

The allied army, though four times more numerous than that of the king, did not venture to attack him among the mountains of the

1495.

July.

Alps; but waited for him near the village of Fornoua, nine miles from Placentia, in an open plain. The courage of the French, animated by the presence of their prince, was superiour to all opposition: they gained the day, pursued their march towards France, and reached the city of Ast with laurels unwithered*.—The duke of Orleans continued still shut up in Noyarra; but Charles at length marching to his relief,

* Comines, who had remained at Venice during the king's march through Italy to Naples, quitted that city on the senate acceding to the league formed against his master, and joined him at Sienna in his return to France. He was present at the battle of Fornoua, of which he has left us a minute relation. "The young king," says he, "was on horseback by seven o'clock in the morning of the 6th of July, on which day the action happen'd, and order'd me several times to be call'd: I came, and found him armed from head to foot, mounted on the finest horse I have seen in my time, named Savoy; he was presented to the king by Charles duke of Savoy, and was of the province of Bresse, black, and had only one eye." Charles ordered Comines to hold a parley with the enemy, if they were so inclined; which was done, but to no effect.—The battle was soon decided in favour of the French, though the king was in imminent danger of being kill'd or made prisoner. He was among the first of those who charged the enemy, and the bastard of Bourbon was taken prisoner within twenty paces of him. Tho' seven or eight young noblemen were appointed to guard and attend his person, yet he was left once almost alone, only a valet-de-chambre named Antoine des Ambus being with him. In this situation he was attack'd
by

relief, extricated him with difficulty from his perilous situation, the garrison having sustained the extremest distresses of famine.

1495.

The king had not sufficient patience to attend the conclusion of a treaty in agitation with Ludovico Sforza; but quitting the fatigues of a camp, returned in haste to Lyons, and once more abandoned himself to love and pleasures. All the hasty and imperfect trophies he had acquired, were soon forgotten. A decay in the affairs of Naples, as rapid as the conquest of it, rendered abortive all his labours. Ferdinand the second, more worthy of a diadem than his father or grandfather, returned to the capital from which he had been driven *. Gilbert, duke of Montpensier, who had been left viceroy there, after
a long

by a band of the enemy; but Charles, principally owing to the excellence of his horse, defended himself till he was rescued by some of his own soldiers. This circumstance the king related the same evening to Comines, after the battle. —The victory of Fornoua was not improved. The French even decamped two days after the action, privately in the night, and pursued their march to Ast, which they reached in eight days, having undergone incredible fatigues, and being continually pursued by the great allied army.

* After the retreat of young Ferdinand from Naples to the island of Ischia, he remained there till the 20th of March 1495, when he quitted it, leaving Innico d'Avalos, brother of the marquis of Pescara, to defend it, and went to Messina in Sicily, to consult with his father Alfonso on the means of

1495. a long and obstinate attempt to retain possession of it, was not only obliged to surrender himself and his troops prisoners of war, but to capitulate for the complete evacuation of the whole kingdom in a month : and the other French commanders

restoring their affairs. He was received by the inhabitants of Messina with great demonstrations of joy. He then determined to have recourse to the fatal expedient of calling in the assistance of Ferdinand the Catholic, king of Arragon, to expel the French, and re-conquer his dominions. Ferdinand was nearly allied to him by blood and marriage, as well as treaties. The king of Arragon immediately promis'd him a naval and military force, and dispatch'd Gonsalvo Ernandez, commonly call'd "the Great Captain," to conduct Ferdinand to Naples, as soon as circumstances should favour the attempt. While Gonsalvo was occupied in reducing Calabria to his obedience, Ferdinand the second embarked from Messina, and had no sooner arrived on the coast of Salerno, than that city and Amalfi immediately declared for him. When he approached the city of Naples, Montpensier, anxious to prevent his landing, marched out to meet him. The inhabitants, availing themselves of the absence of the French commander, proclaimed Ferdinand anew, and received him into the city on the 7th of July, with loud acclamations. He made a procession through the capital on horseback, and such was the universal satisfaction expressed at his return, that Giannone says, the ladies were never satisfied with flinging flowers and odoriferous waters on the young king as he passed under the windows, while the first nobles ran to embrace him in the streets, and to wipe the sweat from his face. Capua, Averfa, Otranto, and many other places, followed the example of Naples, and returned to their allegiance,

refusing

CHARLES THE EIGHTH.

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refusing to ratify or execute so ignominious a treaty, he was sent, together with the forces which he commanded, to Puzzoli; where a malignant distemper destroyed both himself and the greater part of his unhappy countrymen*. Ferdinand, a prince of high expectations, died likewise at this critical juncture, before the reduction of his dominions was entirely effected; and his uncle Frederic succeeded to the throne †.

1495.

October.

Meanwhile new plans of invasion were set on foot

1496.

* This unfortunate prince was of a collateral branch of the house of Bourbon, and allied to the blood royal. The melancholy fate of his army, and the destruction of the French affairs, probably accelerated his end. Comines seems to leave it uncertain whether his death was a natural one, or not. "Aucuns disent de poison," says he, "et autres, de fièvre; ce que je crois mieux."—The greater part of the French troops, and the Swiss in that service, to the number of about 4,000, perished of famine and disease in the island of Procida. Of between five and six thousand men who surrendered prisoners to Ferdinand king of Naples, scarce fifteen hundred ever returned to France.

† While Ferdinand was preparing, says Giannone, to expel the few remaining French from Gaieta and Tarento, the two only places of consequence which they still occupied in the kingdom, he was arrested by death. He had just married Joanna, daughter to the queen dowager, and niece to Ferdinand the Catholic, with the intention of cementing the alliance between that monarch and himself: Alexander the sixth gave a dispensation for the purpose. The young king and queen were diverting themselves in a palace, at the foot of Mount Vesuvius, when he was attacked with a violent complaint,

1496

and

1497.

foot in the court of France. The king, in compliance with the superstition of the age, went to St. Denis, to take leave of the holy saints and martyrs who are buried there. The cavalry had even passed the Alps, and the duchy of Milan was fixed on for the scene of their first attack, when all these preparations were suddenly stopt and laid aside. It is pretended, that Charles's attachment to one of the queen's maids of honour, occasioned this extraordinary change; but it is more natural to attribute it to the decay of his health, which being impaired by his excesses with women, and originally delicate, began to fail. The duke of Orleans was so sensible of this apparent decline, which left the succession open to him, that he refus'd to take

plaint, and being removed to Naples, died in a few days, in the month of October. Giannone speaks of him with high encomiums.—Comines's account nearly coincides with that of the Italian historians. Ferdinand, says he, had only just married his own aunt, a young lady of fourteen years old; she was the legitimate daughter of his grandfather Ferdinand, by his second wife, who was sister to Ferdinand the Catholic, king of Arragon, and of consequence half sister to the late king Alfonso, his father. He mentions this marriage with great horror, as being unnatural and incestuous; and adds, that several of the same nature had been already contracted in the family of the kings of Naples. Ferdinand survived the surrender of the duke of Montpensier's army only a very short time, and expired of a hectic fever and dysentery, in the little town of Sorama, at the foot of Mount Vesuvius.

upon

upon him the command of the army destin'd against Milan; and every appearance of war was totally relinquish'd *. 1497.

The king, whether conscious that his pleasures had been productive of very injurious consequences to his health, or whether from motives of conscientious scruple, renounc'd all his past irregularities; and retiring with the queen, to whom he was exceedingly attached, to the castle of Amboise, employ'd himself in making some additions to the palace, and erecting new apartments. Resigning in a great measure the ideas of foreign conquest, he began to provide for the internal tranquillity of his kingdom; and was occupied in these salutary regulations, when a death equally sudden and singular, put an end to his intentions. 1498.

Charles was in an old gallery at Amboise, from whence he survey'd a game of tennis,

* The young Dauphin, Charles, only son of Charles the eighth and Anne of Bretagne, died about two months after the king's return to Lyons, in the month of February, 1496. His death rendered the duke of Orleans presumptive heir to the crown of France. The king, says Comines, put on mourning, as custom compell'd him to do; but was not deeply affected by the Dauphin's loss. Anne, on the contrary, was inconsolable for her son's death, and wore mourning a long time. Ambition had at least as much share as maternal affection, says the historian, in the grief of the queen.

which

1498. which was played in the ditch of the castle. Desirous of amusing the queen with the same entertainment, he went to her chamber, and taking her by the hand, conducted her to the gallery; but in passing through the door which open'd into it, he struck his head with violence against the top, which was very low; he felt however no immediate bad consequences from the accident. He even had entirely forgotten the blow, and was engaged in deep conversation with his confessor, Jacques de Resli, bishop of Angers, on religious subjects: The king, who had renounced the course of life in which he had indulged himself during the first years of his marriage, was professing his determin'd resolutions to observe sacredly the nuptial fidelity he owed to the queen, when he suddenly fell back in an apoplectic fit. The courtiers and attendants, terrified at so alarming a seizure, immediately laid him on a small pallet-bed, which by accident was in a corner of the gallery; and on which, notwithstanding every effort of medicine, he expired at eleven o'clock

7th April. the same night *.

The

* Philip de Comines says, the king thrice recovered his voice, but quickly lost it again, as the confessor who waited by his majesty, assured him. At each time of his recovering his speech, he cried out, " Mon Dieu, et la glorieuse Vierge Marie, Monseigneur St. Claude, et Monseigneur

CHARLES THE EIGHTH.

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The instant the king had breathed his last, every one of his attendants quitted his body ; and leaving him in the place where he died, galloped in haste to Blois, where Louis duke of Orleans resided, to announce to him his accession to the crown ; while Anne of Bretagne, overcome with grief, and very strongly attached to her husband, abandon'd herself to all the distraction of sorrow. It is said that she sat in a corner of her chamber during two days, constantly refusing any nourishment, and lost in despair. Perhaps her mortified ambition might, in some degree cause so immoderate a distress, as by Charles's death

1498.

“ seigneur St. Blaise, me soient en aide ! ” He calls the distemper of which Charles expired, a catarrh and apoplexy ; and adds, that the indications of his approaching end were apparent to the physicians for three or four days before his seizure. Yet they entertained hopes that the disease would only fall on his arms, of which he would probably lose the use. Some of the French historians have notwithstanding pretended, though without any shadow of proof or probability, that he was poison'd with an orange. It is more natural to apprehend that his irregularities enfeebled his constitution, and accelerated his end.—His funeral was perform'd, by order of Louis the twelfth, with uncommon solemnity and magnificence. The royal body lay eight days in state at Amboise, in an apartment hung with black, during which time continual masses and requiems were performed for the repose of his soul, by various monastic orders. He was not interr'd till a month after his decease, and the expences of his funeral amounted to no less a sum than 45,000 livres.

the

1498. she saw herself again reduc'd from queen of France to duchess of Bretagne; the two sons which she had brought him having both lived a very short time.

The strokes of Charles's character are few and simple. He was furnam'd the Affable and the Courteous; nor is it known that in his whole life, he ever offended or disgusted any one of his servants or subjects. His temper was sweet, and yielding to an excess; open to the impressions of generosity, humanity, and benevolence. —In his person he was little, and ungraceful; his shoulders high, his face plain, and his speech slow and interrupted*: his eyes alone were lively and expressive. Comines's description of him is wondrously forcible, though laconic.—

* Brantome takes some pains to contradict this idea of Charles the eighth, and even produces in opposition to it, the testimony of his grandmother, the seneschale of Poictou, who had been a lady of honour to the duchess of Bourbon (Anne de Beaujeu) and consequently knew the king's person perfectly. She described him as having a handsome and engaging face, and though low and slender in his person, yet well made and agreeable.

If the effigy in bronze upon his tomb at St. Denis, where he is in a keeling attitude, may be supposed to resemble the king, it confirms Brantome's assertion; who accuses Guicciardini of malignity, in belying and depreciating his person, in revenge for the calamities he had brought upon Italy. Francis the first always express'd a peculiar veneration for, and affection to the memory of Charles the eighth.

“ Petit

“ Petit homme de corps, et peu entendu ; mais si
 “ bon, qu’il n’est point possible de voir meil-
 “ leure créature.”—There is a certain unadorn’d
 simplicity in the picture, which charms and
 affects *.

Though Charles’s passion for women was excessive, and is even supposed to have conduced to hasten his death, yet we do not find any particular mistress to whom he appears to have been long attach’d, or who obtain’d any extraordinary ascendancy over him. His capacity was limited, and rendered more so by the mean and confined education which he received in the castle of Amboise during Louis the eleventh his father’s life ; but the virtues of his heart, his observance of justice, and the unbounded benignity of his disposition render’d him the most amiable of princes. Two of his domestics are

* “ I arrived,” says Comines, “ at Amboise two days after
 “ the king’s death, and went immediately to pray by his
 “ dead body, and remained by it five or six hours. Never was
 “ such a mourning seen, nor one which lasted so long. None
 “ of his chamberlains or officers quitted the corpse, nor ever
 “ were royal obsequies more magnificently performed.” He
 repeatedly speaks of him as the most excellent and amiable
 of princes, who was deservedly dear to all who knew him,
 or ever had access to his person. It is not possible to do
 justice to the expressions Comines uses, except by transcribing
 them.—“ La plus humaine et douce parole d’homme
 “ que jamais fut, étoit la sienne ; car, je crois que jamais a
 “ homme ne dit chose qui lui deut déplaire.”

said.

1498. said to have died of grief for the loss of their beloved master. He had not completed his twenty-eighth year, when death deprived his people of so good a king.

In him ended the direct race of Valois ; Louis duke of Orleans, who succeeded him in the throne, being of a collateral branch, and grandson to Louis, the first duke of Orleans, brother of Charles the sixth, assassinated by John duke of Burgundy, in the "rue Barbette" at Paris.

CHAPTER THE FIFTH.

Accession and character of Louis the twelfth.—

His divorce, and marriage with Anne of Bretagne.—Conquest of Milan, and imprisonment of Ludovico Sforza.—Second conquest of Naples, and division of it with Ferdinand of Arragon.—Perfidy of that prince.—Gonsalvo de Cordova drives out the French.—Magnanimity of Louis.—His dangerous illness.—Death of Isabella of Castile.—Julius the second's accession to the papacy.—His character.—League of Cambray.—Death of the Cardinal of Amboise.—Ambition and successes of Julius.—Appearance of Gaston de Foix.—His victories.—Battle of Ravenna.—Death.—Circumstances of it.—French driven out of Italy.—Death of Julius the second.—Accession of Leo the tenth to the pontificate.—Illness and death of Anne of Bretagne.—Her character.—The king's grief.—Marriage of Francis Count d'Angoulesme to the princess Claude.—State of the court.—Louis's third marriage.—Illness.—Death.—Character.

L OUIS the twelfth had attained his thirty-sixth year at the time of his accession to the throne of France. His judgment, naturally clear and discerning, was ripened by experience; and his heart, full of every gentle and beneficent

L

sentiment,

1498.

April.

1498. sentiment, was rendered extremely capable of feeling the calamities of others, by those which he had undergone himself. Under Louis the eleventh he had been treated with a cruel and an unmerited severity, compelled to a marriage the most repugnant to his inclinations, and denied the privileges of his rank. Under the succeeding regency of the lady of Beaujeu, fortune persecuted him with even greater rigour; and the error he committed by appearing in arms against his sovereign at the battle of St. Aubin du Cormier, was fully expiated by a long and rigorous imprisonment, which succeeded. The mild and forgiving temper of Charles the eighth had released him from this captivity, but he was notwithstanding ever regarded with a sort of jealous attention; and was in disgrace with the queen Anne of Bretagne at the time of Charles's decease, on account of an unintended affront which she highly resented *.

The

* The nature of this undesigned injury was very extraordinary. The young Dauphin Charles was dead; and the king finding that the queen's mind was much affected by so melancholy an event, advised some recreation to divert her grief, which might otherwise prey on her constitution. The duke of Orleans, with this intention, appeared at a masquerade, accompanied with several of the nobility, in the castle of Amboise; and exerted himself in a dance with a lady, which he carried to a degree of extravagance. It produced the very opposite effect to that which he intended.

LOUIS THE TWELFTH.

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The first acts of his administration were consistent with his character, and discovered fully that virtuous integrity, and magnanimity superior to any thought of revenge, which uniformly appeared in his conduct. He alleviated the taxes which had been laid on the people; and when he was pressed by the courtiers to punish those who had been his enemies and avowed opponents under the two preceding reigns, he made that glorious reply worthy of eternal remembrance; "It becomes not a king of France, to revenge the quarrels of a duke of Orleans."

Though he was eager to recover the kingdom of Naples from Frederic the new sovereign, and was equally determin'd to assert his title to the duchy of Milan usurped by Ludovico Sforza, yet a domestic concern, which involved in it very important consequences, claimed his early attention. The princess Jane, daughter of Louis the eleventh, to whom he had been married more than twenty years, tho' she was endow'd with the most estimable qualities, yet was not only incapable of producing chil-

ended; for the queen interpreting all these marks of levity and mirth to his pleasure at the Dauphin's death, which rendered him again presumptive successor to the crown, was exceedingly offended, and oblig'd him to leave the court, and retire to the castle of Blois.

L 2

dren,

1498.

dren, but the deformity of her person rendered her an object by no means amiable. On the other hand, the queen dowager, Anne of Bretagne, had retir'd into her duchy; and though the articles of her marriage with Charles the eighth were such as precluded her from the disposal of her hand, in case of his death without male issue, to the injury of the state; yet this convention might be violated, and good policy required that the strictest regard should be paid to those measures which might effectually secure to the crown so rich an acquisition. She was beautiful in her person, though a little lame in one foot; she was yet very young, and had not only been beloved by the present king during the lifetime of her father Francis the second, but, as it was suppos'd, had not been insensible to, or unaffected by his passion. These conjoined motives of the monarch and the man, induced Louis to apply to Alexander the sixth for a dissolution of his marriage; and the pope, whom political interests rendered subservient to the king's wishes, immediately appointed commissioners, and sent his son Cæsar Borgia into France, to decide on the affair. They pronounced the union void and illegal, as having been effected by force; and the king, hastening to Nantes, at which city Anne resided, espous'd her solemnly, and conducted her to Blois, where

1499.
January,

he commonly held his court *. Jane, submissive in her disgrace, and humble from a consciousness of her personal defects, scarce attempted any resistance to the mandate which deprived her of a crown; but retiring to the city of Bourges, devoted her remaining days to piety, and having founded an order of monastic se-

1499.

* Anne of Bretagne had not only retired into her own hereditary dominions after the decease of Charles the eighth, but had given no small uneasiness to the court of France by her conduct. She affected to perform every act of sovereignty in her duchy. She order'd money to be struck with her impresson; she publish'd several very important edicts, accorded letters of nobility, and conferred favours. She afterwards went to the city of Rennes, where she held the states of Bretagne. It appear'd as if she meant to annul the clauses of her marriage contract with the late king, which incorporated Bretagne with the kingdom. In these circumstances, no alternative could be found so wise and natural, as that of her marriage with Louis the twelfth, to prevent the loss of that valuable province. Anne yielded without difficulty to the propositions made to her by the new king; but, with that anxious sollicitude which always characterised her, to secure, not only the immunities and privileges, but, if possible, the entire independance and emancipation of her native duchy, she expressly stipulated in the articles of marriage with Louis the twelfth, that if she should have two sons by him, the youngest should be sovereign duke of Bretagne, with all the prerogatives of the antient princes. This clause, so injurious to France, was happily render'd of no effect, by her not having any son, and by the marriage of her eldest daughter Claude, to Francis Count d'Angoulesme, who afterwards ascended the throne.

1499. clusion, took the veil in a nunnery she had erected *.

This affair being terminated, the king directed his whole attention towards Italy, and principally to the Milanese. His claim to that duchy was incontrovertible, in right of Valentina of Milan his grandmother; and this title was render'd more legitimate by the crimes and usurpation of Ludovico Sforza. After having concluded an alliance with the Venetians, his forces entered Piedmont; and meeting scarce any resistance, made a rapid conquest of the whole

* It cannot be doubted that the intention of Louis the eleventh, when he married his daughter the princess Jane to Louis duke of Orleans, was to extinguish that branch of the royal family, which he always detested. Whatever doubts may arise as to the consummation of the marriage, there can be no question of the incapacity of Jane to bear children; and every motive of policy dictated to annul such a union, in favour of the king's marriage with Anne of Bretagne. — The repudiated princess submitted chearfully to the papal sentence; and the king, pleased with her acquiescence in his pleasure, granted her an establishment the most liberal and magnificent. She had the duchy of Berry, together with several other domains, and a pension of twelve thousand crowns a year. She founded at Bourges, the order of nuns of the Annunciation. Devoting herself wholly to the austerities of a cloister, she at length renounced the title of duchess of Berry, and died in the nunnery which she had endow'd, on the 5th of February, 1505.

duchy,

duchy, only the castle of Milan holding out a few days. Louis, on receiving intelligence of this success, hasten'd across the Alps, made a public entry into the capital of his new dominions habited in the ducal robes, and remained there near three months. 1499.
October.

Sforza, who gave way to the storm, and had early retired into Germany, waited only the favourable moment to return: at his approach, almost every city of the duchy opened to him its gates, and he was received again into Milan, from whence he had fled. This faint gleam of success was quickly follow'd by a sad reverse of fortune. The Swiss troops whom he entertained in his service, with a perfidy which even Sforza's character could not justify, delivered him up to the French general, disguised as a common soldier, under which concealment he had hoped to make his escape. He was conducted to Lyons, where Louis then resided; but Sforza's repeated and flagitious enormities had steeled his bosom against every impression of commiseration or pardon; and without deigning to admit him to his presence, the king remov'd him immediately to the castle of Loches in Touraine. At first, his confinement was very rigorous, and it is pretended that he was shut up in an iron cage; but during the latter years of his life, this severity was mitigated; he had

1500. permission to hunt, and a degree of liberty allowed him *.

* Ludovico Sforza, so famous in the wars of Italy, was second son to Francisco Sforza, who raised himself and his descendants to the dignity of dukes of Milan, after the extinction of the family of Visconti. Ludovico was suspected and accused by the voice of all Italy, of having poison'd his nephew John Galeazzo the reigning duke, on whose death he usurped the duchy, though John Galeazzo left an infant son. The emperor Maximilian the first, who after the death of Mary of Burgundy, and his loss of Anne of Bretagne, married Blanche Sforza, niece to Ludovico, gave that prince the investiture of the Milanese. Ludovico, after having invited Charles the eighth into Italy, abandoned him, and even acceded to the league formed to prevent his return into France. Louis de la Tremouille, who commanded the French forces, seized his person near Novarra, when the Swiss basely betrayed him. He is described by the French historians as a monster stained with parricide, and guilty of the most flagitious excesses. It may, however, be question'd if this portrait is a just one. Guicciardini paints him in very different colours. He says, that "Ludovico possess'd as much capacity and eloquence as any prince of his time; that he "was even soft and beneficent in his disposition." He confesses, that with these good qualities, he was at the same time, "vain, restless, ambitious, regardless of his promise, "and impatient of hearing others commended in his presence." These are surely however not the traits of a prince abandoned to every crime. With Ludovico Sforza was seized his brother, the cardinal Ascanio. This latter prince, as soon as he heard the catastrophe of Ludovico, abandoned the city of Milan, and fled to Venice; but the senate, on Louis's demanding him, gave him up. He was confined at Bourges. Ludovico Sforza died in 1510, at Loches.

The

The complete reduction of all the Milanese which followed Sforza's captivity, and the terror which Louis's arms spread through Italy, rendered the conquest of Naples almost certain; but his weakness in admitting Ferdinand the catholic king of Arragon to divide the spoils which he might have entirely appropriated to himself, was in the event subversive of all his acquisitions. Previous to the attack, a convention was made between the two princes, by which the city of Naples and the northern half of the kingdom was assigned to France; Ferdinand had the provinces of Apulia and Calabria. Frederic, the reigning king, made no abler a defence than his predecessors had done: after a timid and irresolute opposition, finding himself reduced from royalty to the condition of an individual, and abandon'd by all his subjects or adherents, he took the resolution to throw himself on Louis's clemency and bounty. He demanded a safe conduct into France, which was granted him; and the king, with that generosity which eminently characteris'd his conduct, afforded him an asylum and an annual pension of thirty thousand crowns, which was continued to him even after the expulsion of the French from Naples *.

1500.

1501.

Meanwhile

* Frederic was crown'd by Cæsar Borgia, then a cardinal, and son to Alexander the sixth. The ceremony of his coronation was performed with great magnificence, in the cathedral

1501.

Meanwhile Ferdinand was not less diligent in securing his share of the Neapolitan territories. Gonsalvo de Cordova, the celebrated general, whom history has dignified with the title

cathedral church of Capua, on the 10th of August 1497, the city of Naples being at that time desolated with the plague. His accession to the throne was universally grateful to the nobility and people, because it was feared that his predecessor Ferdinand the second intended, as soon as he was settled in his dominions, to pursue and punish with rigour all those who had shewn any attachment to the interest of France. Ferdinand the catholic betrayed and ruined this unfortunate prince, whom he was bound by the ties of honour and consanguinity to have protected. While he affected to aid Frederic in re-conquering his dominions, he formed with Louis the twelfth that treaty by which they were to divide the kingdom of Naples. Gonsalvo de Cordova was the instrument of Ferdinand's perfidy and duplicity. Frederic made a very able disposition, and took post at San Germano, a pass which commanded the entry into the kingdom; but when he discover'd the treachery of Ferdinand and Gonsalvo, he retreated before d'Aubigné the French general, first to Aversa, and afterwards to Naples. Capua was taken by storm on the 25th of July 1501, and abandon'd to pillage. The French, according to Guicciardini and Giannone, committed on this occasion the most flagitious acts of rapine, lust, and enormity. When d'Aubigné approach'd the city of Naples, it surrender'd, and Frederic retir'd into the fortress of the "Castel Nuovo," where he capitulated in a few days. By the conditions of the surrender, all the part of the kingdom allotted to Louis the twelfth, was immediately given to him, except the island of Ischia, which Ferdinand was to retain for six months. His personal liberty was granted

1501.

title of "the Great Captain," made an easy conquest of the two provinces decreed to his master. Tarento only made resistance. Ferdinand, the heir to the crown, and eldest son of Frederic, was shut up in it. His father, supposing it impregnable, had sent him to this fortress under the care of two nobles attached to his interests. They apprehending every thing lost, and re-

granted him, and several other favourable articles respecting his children and adherents. Giannone has drawn a melancholy and affecting picture of the fallen fortunes, and lamentable situation of Frederic and his family, on the isle of Ischia. Gonsalvo de Cordova, in the early part of the revolution had sent six gallies to Naples, to convey the two queens, the sister and the niece of his sovereign Ferdinand the Catholic, into Sicily. "But, on the rock of Ischia, remained," says Giannone, "the wretched Frederic, more unhappy from his children's misfortunes than his own. With him were his younger sons, and his two sisters, Beatrice, widow of Mathias Corvinus king of Hungary, and Isabella, widow of John Galeazzo Sforza, duke of Milan."—In this desperate condition, Frederic, detesting the unnatural perfidy of Ferdinand far more than the open enmity of Louis, determin'd to throw himself upon the lenity and generosity of the latter prince. Having therefore demanded and obtained a safe conduct, he embarked for France with five gallies, leaving his family and the island of Ischia under the protection of the Marquis del Guasto. Louis assign'd him the duchy of Anjou, and a revenue which amounted to thirty thousand ducats a year.—Meanwhile Gonsalvo de Cordova reduced to the subjection of Ferdinand all Apulia and Calabria, except Manfredonia and Tarento. Manfredonia soon surrendered, and Tarento being likewise invested, capitulated on terms.

posing

1501. posing on the solemn promises of Gonsalvo, who swore on the sacraments to leave the young prince his perfect liberty, capitulated, and surrendered the place; but the perfidious Spaniard, who sported with oaths, and disregarded the most binding compacts, detained young Ferdinand prisoner, and sent him to the king of Arragon, who though he treated him with lenity, never would release him*.

Scarce

* The Count de Potenza, and Lionardo, a knight of Rhodes, to whom the young duke of Calabria, Ferdinand, as yet a boy, was intrusted by his father, capitulated to surrender Tarento in four months, if they were not succoured in that space of time. Gonsalvo swore upon a consecrated host, to leave the prince his entire liberty; and Frederic had given them private instructions, when it was no longer possible to resist, to rejoin him with his son in France. "But neither," says Giannone, "could the fear of God, or the opinions of mankind, prevail on the perfidious Gonsalvo." He sent the young prince instantly into Spain, to his master, closely guarded, who received him with external demonstrations of kindness, but detain'd him in an honourable imprisonment. Giannone has inform'd us of the adventures and subsequent fortunes of this prince, the last survivor of the Neapolitan kings. — During Ferdinand the catholic's life and reign, he was strictly guarded, and the king of Arragon gave him in marriage a noble Spanish lady, Mencia de Mendoza, knowing her to be incapable of bearing children. — On the accession of Charles the fifth to the crown of Spain, Ferdinand refused to head the famous revolt against that monarch in 1522. Charles, in gratitude for this act of duty and loyalty, treated him with the warmest demonstrations of affection, and had him constantly
in

Scarce was Naples reduced under its new masters, when dissentions arose between them, on the subject of a small tract of country claimed by both. The Spaniards first infringed the peace by acts of open hostility; but the king having commanded his troops to repel force by force, his general the duke of Nemours took the field, and pushed his advantages over the Spaniards to such a length, that Gonsalvo was reduc'd to retire into the city of Barletta, where the want of ammunition and money had nearly compelled him to surrender. At this juncture, when Louis was on the point of dispossessing Ferdinand of all his division of the kingdom, and success had uniformly attended on his arms, Philip the archduke, who had married Joanna, the daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella, on his return from Spain into his native dominions of the Low Countries, passed through France: he saw the king at Lyons, and as he was invested with full powers to negotiate a peace, he concluded a

1502.

1503.

in his court. Mencia de Mendoza his wife dying, the emperor gave him in second marriage Germana de Foix, queen dowager of Spain, and widow of Ferdinand the catholic. Guicciardini says, that Charles knew the queen to be equally incapable of having issue, as his preceding wife; and that his knowledge of the sterility of Germana de Foix, was a principal motive with him to give her hand to Ferdinand. This prince lived in the court of Spain till the year 1550, when he expir'd; and with him was extinct the Arragonesc line of Neapolitan kings.

treaty

1503. treaty with him in the name of his father-in-law. By the conditions of it, the two monarchs were bound to a cessation of arms; the provinces originally ceded to each were confirmed, and the districts in dispute were to be sequestered into the hands of the archduke.

In the conduct of the two princes after this event, we trace in the strongest manner their opposite genius and character. The ambassadors of Ferdinand who attended Philip, having sworn to the execution of the agreement, under pain of excommunication if violated or infringed, the heralds announced it to the two commanders in Naples. The duke of Nemours, who knew the uprightness and integrity of his king, did not hesitate a moment in offering to obey it, and to withdraw his forces; but Gonzalvo, hardened himself to the commission of crimes, and reposing with full security on the base and treacherous perfidy of Ferdinand, refused to act in compliance with the orders, and demanded an express command for that purpose. Having received an expected reinforcement of Germans which gave him the superiority, he in his turn attacked the French, routed them in two actions, killed the duke of Nemours, and not only made himself master of the city of Naples, but totally subdued the whole kingdom, only Gaieta remaining to France.

May.

The

1503.

The archduke Philip was in Savoy when he received the news of so notorious a breach of that public faith, for which he had pledged his own honour. Shocked at a conduct which marked its author with indelible infamy, he returned instantly into France to put himself into Louis's power; while he dispatched messengers to remonstrate with his father-in-law on his treacherous connivance at Gonsalvo's misconduct, and demanded the restitution of all the country he had conquered. Ferdinand, with his usual duplicity, at one time disowned his ambassadors, and at another his general; offered to restore the kingdom to the captive Frederic, but secretly sent orders to push the war in Naples to the absolute extermination of the French*.

Louis, great in his own virtue, and scorning these despicable subterfuges, ordered the ministers of the king of Arragon to quit his dominions; and while, incapable himself of taking a

* The unfortunate Frederic long entertain'd hopes of being restor'd to the crown of Naples, by common consent of the two kings Ferdinand and Louis. Anne of Bretagne, queen of France, touched with pity for his situation, was his suitor, and strongly urged his cause with her husband. But, by the treaty concluded at Blois in September 1504, between the archduke Philip and Louis the twelfth, all further prospect of his restoration ceased, as the first and most essential article of that treaty was the marriage of Claude, eldest daughter of Louis, with Charles, son to Philip, and who was afterwards the emperor Charles the fifth.

mean

1503. mean revenge for the injury he had receiv'd, he permitted the archduke, unmolested, to return into Flanders, tho' he might have detained him, he made that animated speech to him at his departure.—“If,” said he, “your father-in-law has been guilty of perfidy, I will not resemble him; and I am infinitely happier in the loss of a kingdom which I know how to re-conquer, than to have stained my honour, which I could never retrieve.”

Irritated by a treatment so perfidious, Louis made new, tho' ineffectual efforts to regain his rights in Naples. Gonsalvo, the ablest commander of his age, defeated all his attempts, and retained by his superior military skill the possessions which he had acquired by a breach of every principle of faith.

August. The death of Alexander the sixth, and the accession of Julius the second to the pontificate, was likewise unfavourable to the affairs of France; and the ill success which from every quarter seemed to overwhelm the king, threw him into a violent fever, produced by anxiety and vexation. During the height of his distemper, as his death was apprehended to be near, Anne of Bretagne began to prepare for a retreat into her duchy; and with that intention, embarked a number of rich moveables in boats upon the Loire. The Marechal de Gié meeting them between Saumur and Nantes, gave orders

1504.

orders to stop their progress; thinking it an act contrary to the interests of the state, that the queen should remove at pleasure all her jewels and effects out of the kingdom.——Louis recovered; and Anne, enraged at what she deemed an action of the most presumptuous insolence, vindictive to excess, and in a capacity to revenge herself severely on the Marechal for his conduct, not only procured his exile from the court, and his removal from every post he held; but pushing her vengeance to a length the most unjustifiable and cruel, reduced him to extreme poverty, and left him to end his miserable days in disgrace and indigence *.

Frederic,

* There is no action of Anne of Bretagne which can less admit of apology or justification, than her persecution of the Marechal de Gié, who had only perform'd his duty to the state, in preventing the queen from carrying all her valuable effects out of the kingdom. Nor can Louis himself be exempt from censure and condemnation, for abandoning to the rage of an incensed and vindictive woman, so faithful and so old a servant, who had been personally dear to his two predecessors and to himself. The Marechal was pursued with an indecent and unrelenting vengeance. He was arrested at Orleans, carried as a prisoner to Chartres, and thence to Dreux. The trial was successively transfer'd to the parliament of Paris, and that of Toulouse. The queen descended so far below the dignity of her station, as to defray the expences of the prosecution herself, which in the year 1506 had already amounted to above thirty thousand livres. The parliament of Toulouse, to which tribunal it was transfer'd

1504.

Septem-
ber.Novem-
ber.

Frederic, the unfortunate king of Naples, died about this time at Tours, in a mild and honourable captivity *. His death was followed by that of the great queen of Castile, Isabella; and

as being the most severe of any, pass'd a sentence on him equally inhuman and unmerited. He was long detain'd a prisoner in the castle of Dreux, expos'd to the insults of those who had deposed against him. He did not survive his persecutress, but died in April 1513, near nine months before the queen. Even Brantome, corrupt and unprincipled as he was, yet plainly discovers, even in his commendations of the vengeance of Anne of Bretagne, his real sentiments on her conduct.—The Marechal de Gié was of the illustrious family of Rohan.

* Frederic, the last sovereign of that unfortunate race of the Arragonese kings of Naples, expir'd of a quartan ague, in the city of Tours, on the 9th September, 1504, having before his decease lost all hope of being reinstated in his dominions. He died in the fifty-second year of his age, having reigned near five years. Giannone, who laments over the fallen and extinguished glories of the Neapolitan diadem, lavishes high encomiums on Frederic. "*Principe,*" says he, "*cotanto saggio, et di molte lettere adorno, che a lui, non men che a Ferdinando, suo padre, deve Napoli il Ristoramento delle discipline, et delle buone lettere.*"—The evil destiny of Frederic pursued his unfortunate descendants. His queen Isabella brought him five children, three sons and two daughters. I have already mention'd the fate of the eldest, Ferdinand duke of Calabria, prisoner in Spain. Isabella, having refus'd to put her two younger sons into the hands of Ferdinand the Catholic, whose perfidy she dreaded, was compell'd by Louis the twelfth to quit his dominions. She retired to the city of Ferrara, where she died in 1533, having seen her two younger sons expire before her: her daughters

1504.

and her dominions devolving to the archduke Philip in right of Joanna his wife, changed the whole scale and system of European politics. Ferdinand the Catholic, who after several vain and fruitless efforts to retain the regency of Castile, was again reduced to his original kingdom of Arragon, reconciled himself with the king of France; and married his niece Germana de Foix, in hopes of having issue by her, which might exclude his own grandchildren from the possession of the two thrones of Arragon and Castile*.

The

daughters left no issue. On reading the melancholy destiny of this family, dethroned, exiled, and degraded, one cannot help being reminded of a similar series of calamities, with which, in our own time, the royal house of Stuart has been so singularly marked.

* The death of Isabella queen of Castile, was hasten'd, if not entirely caused by the domestic calamities which ravaged her family. The only son of Ferdinand and Isabella, Don John, a prince of high expectations, who was married on the 4th of April 1497, to Margaret of Austria, daughter of the emperor Maximilian, died at Salamanca on the 4th October of the same year. His widow the princess of the Asturias miscarried soon after of a daughter, by which misfortune all hopes of perpetuating the line were at an end.

In the following year 1498, Isabella queen of Portugal, wife to the great Emanuel, and daughter of Isabella of Castile, expired at Saragossa, only an hour after having brought into the world a son, on the 23d of August. The young prince, named Don Michael, heir to the kingdoms of Castile and Portugal, follow'd his mother on the 20th of July 1500.—By these four successive deaths, Joanna wife to the archduke Philip, and her children, became heirs

1504.

1504

and

1505.

The character of Julius the second, who had ascended the papal chair, tho' less flagitious than that of his predecessor, was not less opposite to the genius and spirit of that religion in which he held the highest place. Haughty, ambitious, warlike, splendid, and enterprizing, nature had designed him for the helmet, not the tiara, and

to the Spanish monarchy. But the unhappy princess Joanna suffer'd so severely in childbed, when she brought into the world her second son Ferdinand in 1503, as to impair her understanding; and this accident, added to her passionate fondness for Philip, who, treated her with indifference and neglect, at length totally deprived her of all capacity to conduct affairs. This concurrence of domestic losses and misfortunes gradually conducted Isabella to the grave. She fell into a profound melancholy, from the continual recollection of them, and her apprehension of the fatal consequences which would probably result on her decease, from the disordered state of the Infanta Joanna's intellects, and the contending interests of Philip and Ferdinand. Under the pressure of these uneasy reflections, she expired on the 26th of November 1504, at Medina del Campo, universally bewailed and lamented. By her will she call'd her daughter Joanna, and her grandson Charles to the succession of Castile; but appointed her husband Ferdinand regent, to the exclusion of Philip the archduke, till her grandson should attain the age of twenty. She forbid any public mourning for her death, and directed her body to be buried at Granada, the capital of the kingdom which she had recover'd from the Moors.

As soon as a scaffold could be erected in the square of Medina del Campo, Ferdinand caused the Infanta Joanna to be proclaim'd queen of Castile, with the accustomed solemnities.

LOUIS THE TWELFTH.

165

formed him to shine in camps, rather than in conclaves. Politically ungrateful, and sinking the priest and the individual in the prince, he forgot the protection which Louis had extended to him under the pontificate of Alexander the sixth, when he found an asylum in the generous treatment of that prince. Jealous of the king's retaining a power in Italy, which might be fatal to the little potentates among whom it was divided, he exerted all the powers of his turbulent and restless genius in exciting enemies to the French; and unrestrained either by the sanctity of his character, or advanced period of life, did not scruple to appear in arms, and lead on his troops in person.

1504
and
1505.

The sudden and unexpected death of the archduke Philip again restored to Ferdinand of Arragon the administration he had lost*. As he

1506.
Septem-
ber.

* The archduke Philip, previous to his death, had by his injudicious and weak administration, alienated the affections of his Castilian subjects. The government of Ferdinand was universally regretted. To Joanna his wife, Philip behaved with the most cruel and insulting contempt; and not content with privately treating her in this unworthy manner, he endeavoured to induce the nobility of Castile to deprive her of the name of royalty, and to confine her as insane. The firmness of the duke of Benaventé, and of the admiral of Castile, prevented him from executing this intention.

He had, however, driven the nobility and people by his

1506. he was in Italy when this event happened, an interview took place at Savona in the Genoese territories, between him and Louis the twelfth. The fears of the former, lest the king of France

violence, to the brink of insurrection and revolt, when his death relieved them from further oppressions. He had quarrell'd with the Inquisition, alienated the magistrates, and permitted his Flemish favourites to dispose of all the first offices for money. In this critical juncture, Philip was seized with a fever which carried him off, occasion'd by violent exercise after a full meal, and then drinking cold liquor. His disorder only lasted six days, and he expir'd on the 25th September 1506, in the twenty-eighth year of his age. He was surnam'd "Le Bel," from his uncommon personal beauty.

The unhappy Joanna, whose attachment to her husband, notwithstanding his indifference to her, was extreme, would not permit his body to be interr'd. She took it away, under the pretence of conveying it to Granada, and wander'd with the corpse thro' the country, travelling only by night with torches, and frequently giving signs of lunacy and outrageous insanity.

When pressed and importun'd by cardinal Ximenes, to assemble the states of Castile, she refused, only repeating continually, "The king my father will come, and settle all things." Yet, in her lucid intervals, she express'd the greatest jealousy of any infringement of her authority; and once even forbad the deputies of the states to invite her father Ferdinand, tho' at other times she appeared anxiously impatient for his return. When Ferdinand arrived, she delegated the regency of Castile to him; and about two years afterwards retired, at his request, to the castle of Tordefillas, six leagues distant from Valladolid, where she passed the remainder of her life.

should oppose his designs on the regency of Castile, were his concealed motives to this interview. They again renewed their alliance, and swore to the strict observance of the articles of peace; but Ferdinand, who knew no principle of public or private fidelity, and only regarded his own interests, infringed and violated every condition on his return into Spain.

1506
and
1507.

The great league of Cambray, formed for the total destruction of Venice, followed soon after. One cannot help considering with astonishment and indignation, an union of the two greatest kings in Europe, the Emperor, and the Pope, against a small, tho' opulent republic. Louis was guilty of a still greater error, in allying himself with his three inveterate and natural enemies, Ferdinand, Maximilian, and Julius, against the Venetians, his only sure and firm ally beyond the Alps. The battle of Ghiera-d'Adda, gained by Louis the twelfth in person over Alviano the Venetian general, reduced that state to the verge of ruin; and had the emperor Maximilian improved the deplorable circumstances of their defeat with celerity, Venice herself had probably been swallowed up by this prodigious confederacy. She averted the final blow, but could never entirely retrieve her former lustre or extent of territory; and Louis, who had been rather influenced by resentment than political motives when he engaged in the league of Cambray, had too much reason to

1508.

1509.
May.

1509. repent the error he had committed, during the future part of his reign *.

* Alviano made a very able and advantageous disposition on the day of this celebrated action, and for a considerable time repulsed the enemy; but being compell'd by the Gascon infantry to quit the strong ground he had occupied among vineyards, where it was difficult to charge, or force him, his troops were not equal to resisting the impetuosity of the French attack; yet, even in this situation, Alviano perform'd all the duties of a great and experienc'd commander. He fought desperately, and made many efforts to retrieve the day. The squadron of gentlemen who attended his person, defended themselves to the last, and refused the quarter which was offered them.

Alviano sought death, himself, without being able to find it. He was at length thrown from his horse, and received a deep wound quite across his forehead. In this condition he would have been killed, had not a French soldier known him, and persuaded his comrades to spare his life. He was conducted to the tent of Louis the twelfth, bloody, and so disfigured by his wound which prevented him from seeing, as to be scarce recognizable. His behaviour under the circumstances of his defeat and captivity, would have done honour to the greatest hero. He expressed his deep sense of the calamity which the republic for whom he fought, had underwent, as well as the personal diminution of glory which he suffer'd; but he added, that his knowledge of the clemency and generosity of the prince whose prisoner he then was, and his equal reliance on the protection of that republic for whom he had fought and bled, left him nothing to dread, or apprehend. Louis was sensible to his high merit; and order'd him to be attended by the best surgeons in his army, and to be treated with every distinction due to his quality and station.

Above eight thousand Venetians perish'd in this action, which had nearly proved fatal to the existence of the commonwealth of Venice.

The

The death of the Cardinal of Amboise, first minister of state, was another loss to the kingdom. He was one of the most virtuous and disinterested statesmen, of whom any history has made mention. Equally a stranger to pride and to avarice; a Cardinal, with only one ecclesiastical benefice, and solely occupied by the interests of his sovereign and his country, he was lamented with their grateful tears*.

1510.
May.

* George d'Amboise was the friend and favourite of Louis the twelfth, when only duke of Orleans. During the captivity of that prince in the tower of Bourges, after the battle of St. Aubin du Cormier, he was indefatigable in his exertions to procure the duke his liberty, and at length succeeded. He was made bishop of Montauban in 1484, afterwards raised to the archbishoprick of Narbonne, and in 1498 he was translated to the archiepiscopal see of Rouen. Caesar Borgia, son to pope Alexander the sixth, brought him a cardinal's hat on the accession of Louis the twelfth, who committed to him the principal administration of affairs. To his capacity and advice may in a great measure be ascribed the brilliant success which attended the arms of France in the Milanese, at the commencement of Louis's reign.—On the death of Alexander the sixth, he would have been raised to the pontificate, if he had not been deceived by the cardinal de la Rovere, (Julius the second) to whom his interests were entrusted, and who placed the tiara on his own head.

The Cardinal of Amboise died at Lyons, during the residence of the court in that city. This event happened in the monastery of the Celestines, on the 25th of May 1510. The king gave every demonstration of extreme sorrow and concern for his loss.

Julius

1510.

Julius the second, consulting only the aggrandizement of the papacy, and the expulsion of the French from Italy, no longer observed any measures with Louis; while the king, actuated by scruples of a timid superstition, forbade his generals to make incursions on the territories of the church, and spared the pontiff from reverence to his station, and priestly character. Embolden'd by this treatment, the pope proceeded to the greatest lengths of violence, and insatiable ambition. Desirous of annexing the duchy of Ferrara to the patrimony of St. Peter, he ordered his general to lay siege to the city of Mirandola, tho' in the midst of a most severe winter, and tho' he had no appearance of equity to justify the attempt. The advances not being made with that rapidity which he expected, he repaired to the place himself, appear'd in the trenches at seventy years of age, encourag'd and exhorted his troops to the attack, and on its surrender caused himself to be carried into the city in military triumph, thro' the breach in the wall.

1511.

Roused by these reiterated acts of hostility, the king at length sent orders to his general Chaumont to spare the pope no longer. The French commander in consequence pressed his holiness so vigorously, that he obliged him to retire to Ravenna; and would have compelled Julius to terms of immediate pacification, had he not himself been seized at this juncture with a mortal

mortal distemper at Corregio in Lombardy. 1511.
Struck with horror and remorse at the supposed crime he had committed in bearing arms against the holy father, and yielding under the hand of death to all the terrors of superstition, he sent to implore the pontiff's forgiveness and absolution. The operations of war stood still, and Julius had time to recover. Fortune, which was not so favourable to him as the influence of religious prejudice had been, soon however reduced him again to the most perilous and critical situation; he apprehended his degradation from the papal chair, and saw Rome itself exposed to the army of the king, without any means of defence. He was even on the point of having recourse to Louis's generosity, and opening a negotiation with him; when having received advice, that the king, prevail'd on by the scruples and importunities of the queen, had prohibited his general from attacking the territories of the church, he resumed his wonted haughtiness, laid aside all thoughts of peace, and prepar'd himself for new campaigns.

In the present century, when the minds of men, cultivated and enlarged by learning, expanded by philosophy, and divested of prejudice, presume to view objects as they are by the steady light of reason, we are amazed at the weakness of our ancestors; and survey with wonder and indignation, an Alexander or a Julius revered amidst a thousand enormities, and exerting a despotic

1511. despotic sway over the cabinets of princes, or conduct of generals by the sole terrors of their sacerdotal office, unaccompanied with any virtues, or even the appearances of decorum and morality.

Notwithstanding his advanced age and ill success, Julius the second meditated fresh schemes of conquest. Louis the twelfth was the constant object of his animosity. He entered into a new alliance against him with Ferdinand of Arragon, the most faithless of princes; and Venice acceded to the confederacy, which was named by a mockery of religion, "The holy League." They retook Brescia, and laid siege to Bologna—when Gaston de Foix appeared. This young hero, nephew to the king, had scarce attained his twenty-third year*. Louis fondly loved him, and

* Gaston de Foix, duke of Nemours, was son to John de Foix, count d'Estampes, by Mary of Orleans, sister of Louis the twelfth. He betray'd such incontestible proofs of military genius and ability, that the king conferr'd on him the government of Milan, and the command of the French forces in Italy.

On the day of the victory at Ravenna he exerted all the qualities of an experienced and consummate general, had he not thrown away his life at the conclusion of the battle like a young soldier. The two armies were nearly equal in number, consisting each of about twenty thousand men. The Cardinal legate John de Medicis, who succeeded to the pontificate a year afterwards by the name of Leo the tenth, the Marquis of Pescara, and Don John de Cardonna, were among the prisoners. But all these advantages were lost by the death

and discerning all the fire of military genius in him, entrusted to his command the army in Italy at that early period of life. His first exploits not only justified the choice which the king had made, but elevated him to a rank above all the commanders of his age. During the height of the siege of Bologna, he entered the city under cover of a prodigious fall of snow unperceived by the assailants, who instantly retired from before the place. He lost not a moment in pushing his advantage; defeated Baglioni the Venetian general who opposed his march towards Brescia; and attacking their entrenchments with only six thousand chosen soldiers, put eight thousand of the enemy to the sword, and totally drove them from the surrounding country. These splendid successes were soon followed by the great battle of Ravenna. Gaston triumphed over the army of the confederates; but, like Gustavus Adolphus, he expired in the arms of victory. His own ardour and youthful impetuosity were the causes of his much-lamented death. Desirous to render the glory of the day complete, he pursued with a small troop a body of four thousand Spaniards, who retreated in good order. They surrounded him;

1511.

1512.

11 April.

death of Gaston. His sister Germana de Foix, of whom mention has already been frequently made, was married to Ferdinand, king of Arragon. She died at Valentia in Spain in the year 1538.

and

1512.

and he was killed, after having fought with the most heroic courage, pierced with twenty-two wounds. The Italians regarded him as a prodigy, and he was surnamed "the thunder-bolt of Italy," from the violence of his movement, the rapidity of his progress, and the suddenness of his extinction*.

Louis

* Brantome enumerates several minute circumstances, preceding and accompanying his death. The action was already gained, when the celebrated Chevalier Bayard, seeing the young prince covered with the blood and brains of a soldier who had been killed close to him, rode up, and demanded if he was wounded? "No," replied Gaston, "but I have wounded many of the enemy." Bayard implored him on no consideration to quit the main body of the army; and to prevent his troops from pillaging, while he himself pursued the flying squadrons. This wholesome and wise advice was overborn by the young hero's martial ardour. A Gascon runaway having informed him, that a body of Spaniards not only maintained their ground, but had repulsed some of his own forces, he instantly charged them in person, crying out, "Who loves me, follows me." — This body of veterans was advantageously posted near a piece of water; they discharged their harquebusses, and then lowering their pikes, received firmly the attack. Gaston's horse was first killed, and he himself was overborn by numbers; only about twenty gentlemen had accompanied him, among whom was Lautrec, afterwards so renowned under Francis the first in the wars of Italy. He was likewise of the house of Foix, and nearly allied by blood to Gaston, whom he defended with the most heroic bravery, crying out, when no longer able to ward off the blows aimed at him, "Spare the general, brother to your queen Germana, and you shall

Louis was greatly affected at his nephew's untimely fate, and the sequel proved how much the affairs of war may depend on a single man. The Marechal Trivulzio succeeded to the command; but the animating spirit which diffused life and vigour was extinct, while dissensions arose in the victorious army, no longer united under one great chieftain. Julius, who had been ready to implore the clemency of the king, was re-encouraged by Ferdinand and the Venetians. A series of disasters succeeding each other, ruined the French affairs; and instead of giving law to all Italy, as might have been expected, they were totally expelled from that country.

The Swiss breaking in upon the Milanese, almost destitute of defence, re-conquered it, after it had been subject to France for twelve years, and replaced Maximilian Sforza, the eldest son of the unfortunate Ludovico, in the duchy. Genoa revolted, and elected a duke. Henry the eighth, king of England, excited by the artifices of his father-in-law Ferdinand, whose daughter Catherine of Arragon he had married, declared

"shall have immense ransom!"—No exclamations or intreaties could however save the prince; and Lautrec himself fell by his side, covered with wounds, and left upon the plain as dead. Bayard was almost driven to madness when on his return he learned his general's fate; and into so great a consternation were the French thrown by this unexpected disaster, that had the enemy rallied and returned to the charge, they would infallibly have retrieved the day.

war

1512. war against France; and the emperor Maximilian deserting all his engagements, went over to the opposite party, and even formed a new alliance with the pope. The king of Arragon improving the opportunity which this union of so many powers against Louis afforded him, attacked John d'Albret, king of Navarre, and soon reduced that small kingdom to subjection. Superiour force, and a bull which Julius issued after the conquest of it, were the only pretexts which Ferdinand could employ to justify this outrage on a prince unarm'd, and who had never render'd himself an object of his resentment or displeasure. The king of France made every possible effort to replace him on the throne, and sent an army into Navarre, but without success; he was engaged with too many enemies, who attempted to overpower him from all quarters.

1513. The death of Julius the second seemed to promise better fortune in Italy. Leo the tenth, who succeeded him, a name renowned in arts and liberal science, opened his short, but memorable pontificate. New efforts were made by Louis against the Milanese, in conjunction with the Venetians, with whom he had formed an alliance. Maximilian Sforza was driven to the last extremities by the French forces, and only the cities of Como and Novarra persisted to hold out; but all these laurels withered in less time than they had been gathered, and after the loss of an engagement,

ment, where all the Gascon infantry was cut to pieces, scarce could the Marechal de la Tremouille conduct the cavalry in safety back to Savoy. 1513.

Meanwhile, Henry the eighth and Maximilian uniting against Louis, joined their forces to attack Picardy; and the Switzers, elate with the advantages which they had gained, entered Burgundy, and laid siege to Dijon the capital, with two-and-twenty thousand men. By means of a treaty humiliating though necessary to France, which the Marechal de la Tremouille made with them, these latter enemies were induced to return into their own country; but the king of England and the emperor gained the battle of Guinegate, August. took Tournay, and spread terror through all the neighbouring provinces. Louis, tho' shaken by such a concurrence of calamities, supported with magnanimity the shock; but wearied by the supplications of the queen, and hoping that Leo might aid his arms which he had hitherto opposed, he sent two prelates to make his submission to the see of Rome, and to testify his contrition and penitence for his past offences. This humiliating conduct, which may be intirely attributed to the influence of Anne of Bretagne over his mind, was the last act of her life. She died at the castle of Blois, of a distemper caused by the improper treatment which she had received in her last lying-in, and at thirty-seven years of age. 1514. January.

The French historians, influenced by the con-

N

sideration

1514.

sideration of the dowry which she brought to the kingdom at her marriage, have bestowed the highest panegyrics on this princess. Her piety, her chastity, her liberality, her attachment to the two successive kings her husbands, her capacity and spirit, have all been subjects of their warmest commendation. Imaginary and ideal qualities have been added to complete the picture. Her conduct as a queen of France does not, however, appear to justify these extravagant encomiums. Force and necessity alone reduced her to give her hand to Charles the eighth; nor, tho' she appears to have been blameless as a wife, did she ever love the people or country over which she reigned. On the contrary, she ever cherished the most avowed predilection for the house of Austria, and endeavoured by every exertion of address or persuasion, to induce the king to marry his eldest daughter Claude to the young archduke, who was afterwards the emperor Charles the fifth. Disappointed in this intention by Louis's better principles, and attentive regard to France, she attempted to transfer the succession of Bretagne to her youngest daughter Renée, and to marry her to the same prince. Tho' both these schemes, so big with ruinous consequences, were rendered abortive, she yet had sufficient influence over Louis, to retard and even totally prevent during her own life, the consummation of the princess Claude's

1514.

Claude's nuptials with Francis Count d'Angoulême, presumptive heir to the crown, to whom the united voice of the nation had destined her; and the queen's death, which only preceded that of Louis the twelfth by a single year, may be regarded as a happy event for the state, in every point of view. Her veneration for popes and priests was highly detrimental to the king's affairs, whose successes were always checked and impeded by her importunate entreaties in their favour. Unforgiving and vindictive, she never pardoned an injury, or set any limits to her resentment. Notwithstanding these incontestable defects, she was infinitely beloved by her husband, who was during some time inconsolable for her loss *. He remained several days shut up in his apartment,

* Anne of Bretagne first introduced into the court of the queens of France a lustre, to which they had always before been strangers. She retained about her person a number of young women of quality, French and Bretons, whom she employ'd in occupations becoming their rank and sex, and whose manners she formed by her own example. She was accusom'd to embroider in the midst of these ladies, and her court resembled a well-regulated community.

She had all the external insignia of royalty, separate from the king her husband. She had her body guards, and she formed a band of a hundred gentlemen, all natives of Bretagne, who attended her at mass, and wherever she moved. She was exceedingly attached to this corps of her own peculiar subjects.—The king was sensible that he yielded too much to her prejudices and importunities on many occasions;

1514. apartment, entirely devoted to grief; ordered all the comedians and musicians to quit the court, and refused audience to every minister or ambassador who did not appear before him in deep mourning. Yielding however to motives of public good, which ever formed the rule of his actions, he soon after married the princess Claude, his eldest daughter, to the Count d'Angoulesme; and the nuptials were solemnized at St. Germain-en-Laye*.

May.

The

but her conjugal fidelity, liberality, and private virtues, rendered her so dear to him, that he was not able to refuse a compliance with her requests. Louis was more tenacious of her dignity, and more sensible to any thing which seemed to wound it, than he was to his own. When the scholars of the university of Paris exposed his court, and even himself to ridicule in their farces, he said, that "he willingly and cheerfully forgave them; but that he warned them not to make the queen the object of their satire, as if they presumed to do so, he would infallibly order them all to be hanged." Anne of Bretagne was seized with the distemper of which she died, on the 2d of January 1514, and expired on the 9th of that month.

* The marriage of Francis with the princess Claude was celebrated above three months after the death of the queen. The court did not quit their mourning on this occasion, and the prince and princess were dressed in black on the day of their nuptials, which was the 18th of May 1514. Several motives not totally void of weight privately considered, rendered Anne of Bretagne peculiarly averse to this union.—She always flattered herself with hopes of male issue by the king. She detested Louisa, Francis's mother, whose unsubmitting spirit never bent beneath her. Above all, she feared and

The death of the queen, together with Francis's marriage, gave a new face to affairs. 1514. Louisa of Savoy, mother to the presumptive heir of the crown, began to display her shining, but dangerous character; and Louis, grown wise by experience, tender of his people, and frugal of the revenues, viewed with a melancholy foresight, the profusion and expensive munificence, which predominated in the Count d'Angoulesme's character. Anticipating the evils which such qualities would probably entail upon his kingdom, he used frequently to exclaim, "Ce gros gars-la gatera tout!" It is even highly to be suspected, that this apprehension formed one of the great inducements to his third marriage; though the desire of effecting a close union and alliance with the king of England, was the ostensible pretext.

Henry the eighth had a sister, the princess Mary, of uncommon beauty. The duke de Longue-

and foresaw her daughter's unhappy days with Francis. Louis the twelfth was of an opposite opinion, and when importun'd by the queen not to give the princess's hand to the Count d'Angoulesme, on account of his irregularities, he replied, "Vous vous trompez : elle n'est pas belle-
" mais sa vertu touchera le Comte, et il ne pourra s'em-
" pecher de lui rendre justice." These apprehensions of Anne were however too much verified in the result. Claude was by no means beautiful, and her husband, amorous and inconstant, never loved her; and tho' he treated her with a degree of respect himself, could not, or did not exact the same behaviour from his mother.

1514. ville who had been taken prisoner at the battle of Guinegate, being sent over to negotiate a treaty of peace between the two monarchs, first opened the overtures for this marriage, which were immediately accepted. The princess was conducted into France; received at Boulogne by a splendid train at the head of which was the Count d'Angoulême, and married at Abbeville to the king*. Mary was very young, gay, and fond of pleasure; her heart, easily susceptible of the impressions of tenderness and passion, had already engaged itself to Charles Brandon, an English nobleman nearly of her own age, whom Henry had created duke of Suffolk, and to whom he had even previously intended to give his sister's hand. Under these

October.

* Mary, youngest daughter of Henry the seventh, and of Elizabeth of York, was born in 1499. She was married to Louis the twelfth at Abbeville, on the 9th of October 1514, and crowned at St. Denis on the 5th of the ensuing November. The king came as far as Abbeville to meet her, accompanied by fifteen hundred gentlemen. Feasts and tournaments succeeded to the nuptials, which were celebrated with great magnificence. Charles Brandon, duke of Suffolk, attended the young queen to France, and even resided in that court during Louis's life, with the title of ambassador from the king of England. He married Mary privately, on the 31st March 1515, scarce three months after the death of the king; and these second nuptials were again solemnized with great pomp by Henry the eighth at Greenwich, on the 13th of May following. Mary was called the queen-duchess. She died in 1534.

circumstances,

circumstances, it cannot be supposed that Louis, a valetudinarian sinking into years, broken by the fatigues of war, tormented with the gout, and his thoughts continually occupied with the recollection of his late queen, could be a very acceptable husband. Francis; amorous and gallant to excess, was captivated with Mary's charms; and it is pretended that he might and would have taken every advantage of his good fortune, if political considerations, and his mother's reprehensions had not, though with difficulty, imposed a restraint on his desires *.

Meanwhile

* It is difficult not to enter a little into this story, curious and interesting in itself, and on which the French writers have been very inquisitive and diffuse. Most of the cotemporary authors relate very circumstantially an anecdote, which, if true, puts it beyond all doubt that Francis had gained the most complete and tender interest in the young queen's affections. It is said that Mary, pressed by the importunities of her lover, and yielding to his entreaties, at length granted him a rendezvous in the palace of the Tournelles; and there can be little question that such an interview would have been decisive. The Count d'Angoulesme dressed himself in the most gallant manner, and was hastening to the queen's apartment, when he was met by Grignaux, an ancient gentleman who had been in the service of Anne of Bretagne. Struck with the more than common magnificence of his dress, knowing his predominant weakness, and mistrustful of his intentions, Grignaux rudely stopt him; and addressing him, demanded whither he was going so hastily. Francis refused to answer satisfactorily to this question.—

1514.

Meanwhile Louis approach'd the verge of life.
His nuptial pleasures conducted him to the tomb.
Forgetting his maxim which he had been used so
frequently to repeat, that "Love is the king of
" young

"Donnez vous en bien garde, Monseigneur," said Grignaux
"frowning; "pasques Dieu! vous vous jouez à vous donner
"un maître; il ne faut qu'un accident pour que vous restiez
"Comte d'Angoulesme toute votre vie."—This bold and
peremptory remonstrance was not lost on the person to whom
it was directed. Francis paused on the very threshold of his
mistress's chamber, while love and empire disputed for an
instant in his bosom. The latter triumphed; and submitting
to Grignaux's counsel, he had either the magnanimity or the
weakness to suffer himself to be led away from the tempta-
tion, and conducted out of the palace.

Notwithstanding the air of the marvellous spread through
this adventure, it must be confessed that there is nothing in
it either unnatural or improbable. Brantôme relates it, and
adds, "that Mary attempted to counterfeit pregnancy on
"the death of the king; but Louisa of Savoy was not to be
"so over-reached when a crown depended on the fact, and
"soon discovered the deceit." To this last story however,
no faith is due, nor is it asserted by any other author. Besides,
it is universally allowed that she was exceedingly attached to
Charles Brandon, duke of Suffolk. Her conduct towards
him, and her marriage, put this beyond a doubt. Scarce three
months elapsed between Louis's death, and her second nup-
tials.—Every possible precaution was unquestionably taken
by Francis to prevent a suppositious child being produced
by the queen. The physicians, previous to the king's mar-
riage, had assured the Count d'Angoulesme, that Louis was
incapable of having children; and this assurance naturally
redoubled his jealous attention to Mary's conduct. The
baroness

LOUIS THE TWELFTH.

185

1514.

"young persons, but the tyrant of old men," he abandon'd himself to his immoderate fondness for the young queen, and broke through his accustom'd regularity of life at the banquets and entertainments which followed his marriage. His constitution, already shaken, and debilitated by a slow fever, could not long sustain these exertions. While elated with the hope of future conquests, and secure on the side of England, he determined again to attack the Milanese, and prepared a considerable army to pass the Alps, he was seized with a fever and dysentery at the palace of the Tournelles in Paris, which reduced him so low, that he breathed his last a few days after, at fifty-three years of age *.

1515.
1st January.

He

baroness d'Aumont for some time after the king's death, always slept with her; and the princess Claude, even before his decease, never quitted her by day. Francis, however, did not immediately assume the royal title on Louis's decease, till he had demanded of the queen dowager, if she was pregnant? To which Mary replied in the negative as far as she was able; adding, that "she knew of no other sovereign besides himself, as she was not conscious of being with child." This is expressly asserted by the Marechal de Fleuranges in his Memoirs, a writer far more worthy of credit than Brantome. She retained her annual dowry of 60,000 livres, during her life.

* There can be no question that Louis the twelfth hasten'd his death, by the excess of his attachment to the young queen. He changed his whole course of life; instead of dining

1515.

He was the most virtuous prince whom France ever saw reign; perhaps who has reigned in Europe. It was proclaimed in the hall of the palace at his death, "Le bon roi Louis douze, "Pere du peuple, est mort!"—The tears which he used to shed when the necessities of war or state obliged him to levy an additional subsidy, however small, on his people, prove how justly he merited the appellation of their parent. In his clemency, and his unbounded benevolence, he was not inferior to Henry the fourth; nor

dining at eight in the morning, as he had been accustomed to do, he went to dinner at noon; and his hour of retiring to rest was changed from six in the evening to midnight. This total alteration in his manner of living soon destroyed his health, and impaired his already enfeebled constitution. Guicciardini says, "*mentre che dando cupidamente opera alla bellezza eccellente, et all' eta della nuova moglie, giovane de dieci otto anni, non si ricorda della sua eta, et della debilita della complessione.*"—When the king found himself gradually sinking under the effects of his distemper, he sent for Francis Count d'Angoulesme to his bed-side, and stretching out his arms to embrace him, "I am dying," said he, "I recommend to you our subjects." Francis was affected at this scene, and intreated the king not to despair of his recovery, which the physicians did not think to be beyond hope. Louis is said by the Marechal de Fleuranges to have betrayed some weakness in the last moments of his life, and to have expressed much regret at being so soon torn from the connexions of his family and people. He expired in the arms of Francis, who interr'd him near Anne of Bretagne his beloved wife, in the abbey of St. Denis.

were

were these benign qualities obscured and diminished by that unhappy passion for women, by those pernicious foibles which accompanied the founder of the house of Bourbon to the grave. Louis was himself a pattern of conjugal fidelity; and his court, decent and restrained, neither knew the elegant politeness, or the luxurious gallantry, which Francis the first introduced into it on his accession to the throne. His valour and military capacity had been distinguished in many campaigns. His temper open, candid, and cheerful, made him easy of access, and gracious in his manners to the highest degree. He loved letters, and protected learned men; but did not extend to them that princely liberality, which has immortaliz'd his successor. Throughout his whole character, we trace none of those splendid and glittering vices, which in kings are too apt to dazzle and even delight; and which carry in them that delusive magic, so calculated to impose on the human mind. His encomiasts were not only poets and men of genius, ever ready to prostitute their talents: The voice of a whole people, their simple and unembellished lamentations were his best panegyric. His person resembled the mind which animated it. Not elegant or beautiful, but amiable, interesting, and agreeable.

For his vices we search in vain. The shades
of

1515. of his character it is unnecessary to conceal. His attachment to the queen Anne of Bretagne frequently degenerated into uxoriousness, and caused him to commit errors very injurious to his affairs. He was duped by Ferdinand, and insulted by Julius.—In him expired the elder branch of the house of Orleans, and that of Angoulesme succeeded to the throne.

CHAPTER THE SIXTH.

Accession and Character of Francis the first.—Character of Louisa Countess d'Angoulesme.—Battle of Marignano.—Death of Ferdinand of Arragon and of the emperor Maximilian.—Interview of Francis and Henry the eighth.—Commencement of the wars between Francis and the emperor Charles the fifth.—Character of Charles, Constable of Bourbon, and of Bonnivet.—Death of Leo the tenth.—Loss of Milan.—Execution of Semblençai.—Conspiracy of the Constable of Bourbon.—Circumstances of his treason and flight.—Death of the Queen.—The admiral Bonnivet enters Italy.—Bourbon lays siege to Marseilles.—Francis pursues him over the Alps.—Battle of Pavia.—Death of Bonnivet.—Enumeration of the circumstances of the king's capture and imprisonment.—Francis's confinement, and removal to Madrid.—Measures of the regent, Louisa of Savoy.—The king's rigorous captivity.—His illness.—Visit of the duchess of Alençon, his sister.—His release, and entry into his dominions.—Commencement of the favour of the duchess d'Estampes.

THE accession of Francis the first to the crown, was accompanied with all those circumstances which could diffuse over it a particular

1515.

January.

1515. ticular lustre*. Nature had endowed him with every quality of mind and person, formed to intoxicate both his people and himself. He had only passed his twentieth year a few months. Finely formed, with the mien and appearance of a hero, his personal accomplishments were not inferior to his external figure. He excelled in the exercises of a cavalier, and pushed the lance with distinguished vigour and address. Courteous in his manners, bounteous in his

* Francis was born on the 12th of September 1494, at the castle of Cognac in the province of Angoumois. His father Charles, Count d'Angoulesme, died two years after the birth of his son in 1496. Louis the twelfth appointed Arthur de Gouffier-Boisy, preceptor to the young prince, who nourished in him that passion for military glory, and cultivated in him that love of letters, which so eminently distinguished Francis when he ascended the throne. Brion, who was afterwards admiral of France, and Montmorenci, so renowned as Constable, were his friends and companions at this early period of life. Louis the twelfth expressed the greatest affection for him, and created him duke of Valois; though the aversion of the queen to the marriage of her eldest daughter Claude with Francis compelled the king to wait 'till after the death of Anne of Bretagne, before that union could be effected. The antipathy which always subsisted between the queen and Louisa of Savoy mother of Francis, formed another obstacle to this marriage; and it is said, that Anne attempted to send her rival back into Savoy, but was prevented by the interposition of Louis the twelfth. Louisa afterwards revenged on the daughter the haughty indignity with which she had been treated by the mother.

temper

temper even to prodigality, the nobility, whom Louis the twelfth's frugality and more reserved deportment had kept at greater distance, crowded round their young sovereign with pleasure and admiration. Eloquent in the cabinet, and courageous in the field, he shone alike in arts or arms; and while he extended his generosity to science and genius, he impatiently waited for the occasion of signalizing his prowess, and acquiring the glory of a warrior *.

The situation of public affairs at the death of the late king, immediately presented an opportunity for the exercise of this martial spirit. Francis, equally determined to conquer the Milanese as his predecessor had been, laid instant and open claim to that duchy; nor did he either withdraw his pretensions, or suspend his preparations, in consequence of the formidable alliance, which the emperor Maximilian, Ferdinand of

* We may judge of the lustre with which Francis open'd his reign, and how high was his reputation throughout all Europe, by the brilliant colours, with which Guichiardini has drawn his character. The portrait is extremely flattering.—“Delle virtù, della magnanimità, dello ingegno, et
 “spirito generoso di costui, s'haveva universalmente tanta
 “speranza, che ciascuno confessava non essere già per moltissimi anni pervenuto alcuno, con maggiore aspettatione
 “alla corona. Perche gli conciliava somma gratia il fiore
 “dell'età, che era di 22. anni, la bellezza egregia del
 “corpo, la liberalità grandissima, la humanità somma con
 “tutti, et la notitia piena di molte cose.”

Arragon,

1515.

Arragon, Sforza, the Switzers, and soon after Leo the tenth, formed for its preservation. While he repaired himself to Lyons, a part of his army crossed the Alps. After having surmounted infinite difficulties in the carriage of the artillery over rocks and precipices, they effected their passage; and even used such extraordinary expedition as to surprize and take prisoner Prosper Colonna, general of the papal forces, who lay encamped with a thousand cavalry upon the river Po, just as he was about to sit down to table, without the least apprehension of their approach.

On receiving this news, the king set forward to join his forces, having first delegated the regency during his absence, to the Countess d'Angoulesme his mother. She acted so high and important a part under the reign of Francis, as to make it necessary to enter somewhat minutely into her character. Louisa of Savoy connected all the great qualities and defects of an elevated, but ill-regulated mind. The beauty of her person was scarce exceeded by that of any lady in the court; and, like her son, she surpassed in all those accomplishments which confer elegance and grace. During the years of retirement which she had passed at the castle of Cognac in Angoumois after her husband's death, the education of Francis had constituted her sole pleasure and occupation; and to her care on this
important

important point, the nation was indebted for the greater part of those mature and manly qualifications which rendered their sovereign an object of love and admiration.—Her ambition and thirst of power were in some measure justified by her talents for government. She possessed courage personal and political; a magnanimity undepressed even in adversity, uncommon penetration, firmness, and capacity.—But these great endowments were sullied and contrasted by yet superiour faults. Not less vindictive than Anne of Bretagne, she was insensible to every public or private feeling, when her resentment was to be gratify'd; and borne away by the impetuosity of her passions, she abused the influence which she possessed over the king, to purposes the most pernicious and criminal. Rapacious of the national treasures, and avaricious in the accumulation of her own, with all the little foibles of her sex, and a slave to more than female vanity, her bosom was yet susceptible of, and open to all those violent and contradictory emotions, which love and jealousy occasion in the human heart. Such was the celebrated Louisa of Savoy *.

1515.

Meanwhile

* She was daughter of Philip the second, Count de Bugey, who had long served in the army of France under the reign of Louis the eleventh, and who afterwards became duke of Savoy in 1496. Louisa was born in 1477, and married

1515.13th Sep-
tember.

Meanwhile Francis having put himself at the head of his army, marched forward into the Milanese. All the cities opened their gates to him without a blow, and the Switzers, uncertain whether to retreat or to give battle, retiring before him, he encamped at Marignano, only a league distant from Milan. A reinforcement of ten thousand men arriving to their aid, determined them to the latter; and actuated by a sort of military frenzy, which the exhortations of the celebrated Matthew Schiener, Cardinal of Sion had inspired, they advanced furiously to attack the French in their lines. History scarce affords any instance of an action, disputed with so enrag'd an animosity. It began about four in the afternoon in the month of September, and lasted more than three hours after the night closed in. Lassitude and darkness brought on a cessation of arms, without diminishing the ardour of the combatants, or deciding the fortune of the day; and so much were they intermingled during the heat of the contest, that many squadrons passed the night among those of the enemy. Francis himself, after having shewn the greatest intrepidity, laid himself down upon the carriage of a piece of artillery; and

at eleven years of age to Charles, Count d'Angoulesme, on the 16th of February, 1488. She had only 35,000 livres in dowry, at her marriage.

like

like Darius after the battle of Arbela, is said to have seized with eagerness a little water mixed with dirt and blood, which one of his soldiers brought him in a helmet to assuage his thirst. With the dawn of light the Switzers renewed the charge, but at length were repulsed with prodigious slaughter; and a body of them being cut to pieces in a wood where they attempted to shelter themselves, the rest retreated in good order. Ten thousand remained dead upon the field *.

The

* There is scarce any battle of which history makes mention, which has been disputed with greater obstinacy than that of Marignano. The Marechal de Trivulzio, who had been in seventeen engagements, said, that "this was a combat of giants, and all the others only children's play." The Constable Charles of Bourbon was eminently instrumental in the success of the day, as Francis himself confess'd in the letter which he wrote after the action to his mother the Countess d'Angoulesme. The king, at the time when night separated the two armies, or rather suspended their mutual animosity, found himself surrounded by a few of his own attendants, who collected about him, and had only one torch to light him. While he was in this situation, Vandenesse, brother of the Marechal de Chabannes arrived with the information, that they were only fifty paces from one of the greatest Swiss battalions, and that they must infallibly be made prisoners if they were discovered. They held a consultation on the best means of escaping this danger; and at length, all attempt to retreat being very hazardous, de Boisy resolved to extinguish the flambeau, and to let the king

1515.

October.

Decem-
ber.

The terror which this victory inspired, together with the return of the Swiss troops into their own country, left Maximilian Sforza almost destitute of any assistance. He retired however into the castle of Milan, and endeavoured to defend himself in that fortress; but finding it impracticable, he surrendered it, together with the city of Cremona, to the Constable Charles of Bourbon, on honourable conditions; and a very ample pension being assigned him in France, he was conducted into that kingdom. All the duchy of Milan immediately submitted and received the French *.

This conquest was followed by an interview between Francis and Leo the tenth, which took place

remain where he was. Francis lay down, without sleeping, and completely arm'd, on the carriage of a cannon, anxiously expecting the break of day. The king wore on that memorable occasion a coat of mail of blue steel, powdered with fleurs-de-lis. He was in every place of danger, and exposed his person like the meanest foldier. His horse was wounded in two places with a pike, and he himself, though not wounded, had received some violent contusions in his arms. Francis of Bourbon, duke de Chatelleraud and brother to the Constable of Bourbon, was kill'd in the action, by his side. The Switzers are said to have lost near 15,000 men in this battle, and the French about 6,000. The former, however, made an orderly retreat, and even repulsed the Venetian troops, who attempted to attack them.

* Maximilian Sforza surrendered the castle of Milan on conditions, to the Constable Charles of Bourbon, after a siege of twenty

place at Bologna *. The artful pontiff flattered the young monarch, and dextrously in- 1515.

twenty days, tho' he had provisions in the garrison which might have enabled him to hold out some months. Francis the first stipulated for the payment of his debts, to allow him an asylum in France, and either to give him a pension of 30,000 crowns, or to procure him an annual income in ecclesiastical benefices to that amount, together with a cardinal's hat.—The new duke of Milan, Maximilian Sforza, thus driven from his dominions, and by a fate similar to that of his father Ludovico, become a prisoner to the king of France, descended from his painful eminence without betraying any emotions of concern or shame. Destitute of ambition, or of talents, he was uneasy under the weight of power, and gladly retired from a situation where he was continually expos'd to the exactions or insolence of those who called themselves his allies. He was a feeble prince, neither possessing abilities in the cabinet, or military ardour in the field. He was immediately conducted into France, and died at Paris, on the 10th of June 1530.—Before the approach of the French troops to invest Milan, the Cardinal of Sion, who had retired to that city after the defeat of his countrymen at Marignano, fearing the resentment of Francis if he fell into that prince's hands, and scarce dreading less to meet his vanquished friends, fled into Germany to the emperor Maximilian. He carried with him the brother of the duke of Milan, Francis Sforza, the last prince of that house, so celebrated and so unfortunate.

* Leo arrived at Bologna on the 8th of December, and Francis, two days afterwards. The cardinals de Fiesco and de Medecis were sent by his holiness to meet the king on the frontiers of the papal dominions, and to conduct him to Bologna. Leo and Francis passed three days together in conferences respecting the political situation of Italy, and parted with reciprocal demonstrations of respect.

1515.

clin'd him to the purposes which he himself wish'd: When their conference was ended, the king returned in haste to Lyons, where his mother waited for him, and his arrival was signalized by acclamations of triumph.

1516.
23d January.

Ferdinand king of Arragon expired at this time of a dropsy and atrophy, occasion'd, as is said, by certain medicinal drugs which his queen Germana of Foix had administered to him, in hopes of having issue*. His own hereditary dominions, together with those of Isabella of Castile,

* Ferdinand the Catholic had been for some months previous to his death, in a declining state of health. In July 1515 he was taken with so violent a fit of vomiting at Burgos in the night, that his life was for some time in imminent danger; and tho' he recover'd that attack, his physicians announced to him, that he would not survive it very long. In the autumn he quitted Valladolid, and having determin'd to pass the winter in the province of Andalusia, hoping to derive benefit from the mildness of the climate, he stopped for some time at the city of Placentia: from thence he continued his journey to Truxillo; and setting out to meet his grandson the Infant Ferdinand, he was compelled by illness to stop in a miserable village called Madrigalejo, at a little inn, which was the only tolerable habitation in the place. Finding himself much exhausted, he called immediately for his confessor father Matienzo, received the sacraments of the church, and prepared himself for his dissolution. He declared his daughter Joanna sole heiress to all his dominions; and after her, the archduke Charles, his grandson. He left his queen Germana a pension of thirty thousand florins a year. He lastly delegated the regency of Castile to Cardinal Ximenes, and that of Arragon

1516.

Castile, descended to young Charles the archduke. This event did not prevent the emperor Maximilian from making one great effort in Italy. He broke in upon the Milanese with near forty thousand Switzers and Germans, and even laid siege to Milan; but the irresolution which ever characterized all Maximilian's enterprizes, giving time to the Constable of Bourbon to approach the city, tho' with inferiour forces, he retired; and his troops ill paid, were with difficulty kept together, and at length disbanded.

If the personal character of Francis, and the uniform success which had hitherto attended on him, might reasonably affect the little states of Italy with apprehension, the power of Charles was yet more alarming, because more ample and extensive. To the united kingdoms of Castile and Arragon, he joined Naples, the Netherlands, and the Indies; and superadded to these was the expectation of the imperial crown, which from Maximilian's age and infirmities seemed to be not far distant. Francis himself foresaw the ga-

1516
to
1518.

Arragon to his natural son, the archbishop of Saragossa. The queen Germana arrived from Lerida on the 22d January, some hours before his death, and he expir'd the ensuing day between one and two o'clock in the morning, in the sixty-fourth year of his age.—He directed his body to be interred near that of Isabella of Castile, at Granada. Though a treacherous and faithless prince, he doubtless founded the glories of the Spanish monarchy, and added Naples, Granada, and Navarre to the united diadems of Castile and Arragon.

1518. thering storm, and attempted to dissipate or delay it by a treaty concluded with Charles at Montpellier, which was soon after followed by another with Henry the eighth of England: but the death of Maximilian broke down these insufficient barriers; and opening a field of competition so important and uncommon, laid the basis of private animosity and public wars, which though sometimes suspended, were never terminated or adjusted during the lives of the two rivals.

1519. The emperor died at Lintz upon the Danube, while he was employed in attempts to gain the electoral suffrages, for his grandson's nomination as king of the Romans*. Charles and Francis instantly declared themselves candidates

* Maximilian, after having held a diet at Augsbourg, had repaired from thence to Inspruck in the Tyrol, where he was attacked with a slow fever, in order to dissipate which by change of air, he embarked on the river Inn for Lintz in Upper Austria. The disorder encreasing on his way, at the town of Wells, he endeavoured to expel it by violent exercise. On his return from hunting one day, being exceedingly thirsty, he eat a great quantity of melons; and having afterwards injudiciously taken medicine, his distemper, which before was only an intermitting fever, changed to a continual one, attended with a violent dysentery, which carried him off in the sixtieth year of his age. He order'd on his death bed, that his body should neither be embalm'd or embowel'd, but that the cavities should be filled with quick lime. He was interr'd, by his own directions, at Neustadt in Austria. He expired on the 12th of January 1519.

for

for the empire, though without any external or
apparent marks of mutual antipathy: the con-
test was soon decided, and the former ascended
the imperial throne. 1519.

This increase of splendour and of power yet
farther alarmed the king; and his disappointed
ambition conspiring with his political terrors
on the union of so many states under one
sovereign, conduced to hasten an interview
which had been before agreed on between
him and Henry the eighth. It took place
between Ardres and Guisnes in the month of
June. A magnificence unequalled, and which
resulted from the temper of the two princes,
splendid, profuse, and vain, made the spot retain
the name of "The field of the cloth of gold." 1520.

The interview lasted ten or twelve days; and
tournaments, banquets, and every species of di-
version were exhibited. The queens of either
monarch honoured it with their presence; and
Francis expended in this empty shew, useless to
his kingdom, a greater sum than Charles had dis-
tributed to acquire the imperial crown. It was
attended with no durable or solid friendship be-
tween the two kings. By a silent stroke of policy
destitute of eclat, but wiser and more effectual,
the young emperor had passed over into England
previous to this interview, and entered into con-
nections with Henry, which experience proved
to be much more permanent and binding.

While

1521.

While the ceremony of Charles's coronation was performed at Aix-la-Chapelle, Francis made an unsuccessful effort to regain the little kingdom of Navarre, which had been so unjustly conquer'd by Ferdinand of Arragon, from John d'Albret. Those extraordinary and sudden reverses of fortune which mark this whole reign, were equally visible here. Pampelona the capital of Navarre was taken, and the whole surrounding country reduced to obedience; but the rashness and imprudence of the French commander Lesparre, brother to the Countess de Chateau Briant, Francis's mistress, who made an irruption into Castile, and was defeated before the city of Logrogno, to which he had laid siege, soon restored to Spain all she had lost, and obliged him to evacuate his new conquest.

Numberless sources of discord fomented the natural rivalry of the two monarchs; and Charles, more cautious, and carrying his views farther than the king of France, had already entered into a strict alliance with Leo the tenth, and fixed the wavering pontiff in his interests. The re-establishment of Francisco Sforza, Maximilian's younger brother, in the duchy of Milan, was the grand connecting tie of this new confederacy. So visibly did it appear calculated to produce future calamities, that Chievres, the emperor's preceptor, when he received the news, expir'd with sorrow, in the sad anticipation of
the

the misfortunes which must result from it; often repeating, "Ah! how many evils!" His prediction was too exactly verified *.

1521.

May.

A singular accident befel Francis at this time. The court resided at Romorantin in the province of Berri during the winter; and according to the manners of that age, when an exertion of vigour or activity characterised and constituted almost every diversion, the king, with a small band of gentlemen attacked the house of the Count de St. Pol, who defended it with another party. Snowballs, and other weapons of that nature were used by the assailants; one of those on the opposite side unfortunately threw down a torch which struck

January.

* William de Croy, Seigneur de Chievres, and duke of Soria, was a nobleman of the most approved integrity, and acknowledged talents. Louis the twelfth, to whom Philip king of Castile had left the guardianship of his son Charles, then only six years of age, appointed Chievres governor of the person of the young archduke. His choice could not have fallen on a more irreproachable subject. Chievres educated his royal pupil in a manner which might qualify him for filling with dignity and wisdom the highest situation in Europe. Charles loved and respected him. He died at Worms in May, 1521, at the age of sixty-three. The death of his nephew the Cardinal de Croy, together with the anticipation of the misfortunes in which Europe was on the point of being plunged by the ambition and rivalry of Charles and Francis, aggravated and increased the symptoms of his disorder, which carried him off in a few days. It has been asserted, though probably without foundation, that his end was hastened by unnatural means.

the

1521. the king upon the head, and wounded him severely. He was long confined by this blow; and as it became necessary to cut off his hair, he never would suffer it to grow again, but introduced the fashion of wearing the beard long, and the hair short; which subsisted generally in Europe till the reign of Louis the thirteenth, when the ancient custom was resumed *.

The war which had been long menaced, at length began. Charles and Francis, concealing in some degree their animosity, and endeavouring to preserve to the last the appearance of friendship, only abetted and supported their respective vassals. The desire, common to each, of gaining the king of England, who professed himself the common arbiter of their disputes, obliged them to observe a certain moderation and delicacy; but this veil was soon withdrawn,

* It was never known by what hand the torch was thrown which struck the king. Francis, with the truest magnanimity, never would permit any attempt to be made to discover the person who had wounded him. "I only," said he, "have been in the wrong. I was guilty of the folly, and I ought to be punished for it." His life was despaired of for several days. It was at first reported that he was dead, and afterwards that he had lost his sight. The king shewed himself as soon as possible to the foreign ministers, in order to disprove these assertions. It has been pretended, without foundation, that the blow was given by the Captain de Lorges; but this is unquestionably a mistake.

and

and Francis, at the head of a numerous army, impatient to signalize his valour, and renew the laurels won at Marignano, faced his great antagonist near Valenciennes, on the banks of the Schelde.—Here began the fatal train of errors, which in the event reduced France to the most calamitous condition. The command of the van belonged to Charles of Bourbon, in right of his office as Constable; but the king, who never loved him, and who by the resentment of his mother Louisa against him had been still farther prepossessed in his disfavour, chose to confide this important trust to Charles, duke of Alençon, first prince of the blood. Not satisfied with this unmerited and unjust affront, he added to it another, not less injurious to his own fame, than the former was to the Constable's honour. The emperor, desirous of avoiding an engagement, and fearing that from the vicinity of their forces he might be unavoidably compell'd to it, remov'd his army in some confusion, and retir'd under cover of a thick fog to a greater distance. Bourbon saw the opportunity, and implored his sovereign to take advantage of it; but Francis, jealous of a participation which must deprive him of part of the glory of the action, and preferring the gratification of his own resentment to more magnanimous and salutary principles, rejected with a cold contempt the Constable's advice, and refused to seize the occasion,

1521:

October.

1521. cation, which never returned, of combating with his rival in person *.

These repeated insults sunk deep into Bourbon's mind, though as yet they produced no apparent effect. Deeply affected however with

* It is universally allow'd that had the Constable of Bourbon's advice been follow'd, the emperor's army must have been defeated on this occasion. The Marechals de la Tremouille and de Chabannes, as well as the celebrated Chevalier Bayard joined in opinion and entreaty with the Constable, to induce the king to attack the imperial forces in their retreat. But the camp was divided between two great factions. The duke of Alençon opposed the opinion of attacking the Count de Nassau, who had been sent by Charles with 12,000 Lansquenets, and 4,000 horse, to prevent the passage of the Schelde, and who might have been cut off from a possibility of rejoining the main body. He was supported in this advice, so contrary to the interests of France, by the Marechal de Chatillon, who had received private directions from Louisa of Savoy, not to expose her son's person to danger, and to dissuade him as much as possible from a general action. Francis himself espoused his mother's quarrel with the Constable, and was glad to seize the occasion of mortifying and opposing him. Such were the motives which conduced to determine the king to lose this opportunity of defeating his rival. It is evident how deep an impression the injury done to the Constable by giving the command of the van to the duke of Alençon, made on his mind, from the answer which he returned to Francis, when after his flight to the emperor, the king demanded of him the collar of St. Michael, and the sword of Constable.—“I left,” said he, “the collar under the head of my bed at Chantelle; and as to the Constable's sword, he deprived me of it at Valenciennes.”

the

the preference given to the duke of Alençon, 1521. and imputing it to the influence and suggestions of Louisa, Francis's mother, he could not help publickly saying, "That the king had followed
" the impressions of a woman, who had no more
" regard to justice, than she possess'd honour."—

The great lines of the Constable's character, which form a contrast to those of Francis, contributed to encrease their mutual dislike. Of a temperate and steady courage ever master of himself, he was calculated by nature for command, and capable of the most arduous military achievements. No general of his age possessed so fully the art of conciliating the affections of the soldiery, and moulding them to all his purposes. Munificent and liberal where prudence required it, he was naturally an œconomist. Silent, thoughtful, and inclined to taciturnity, he did not cultivate the arts of ingratiating himself; but wrapped in a haughty virtue which disdained to stoop even to the honourable means of acquiring favour or popularity, he refused to owe any thing except to his own personal merits*.

Qualities

* Charles of Bourbon-Montpensier, was the second son of Gilbert duke of Montpensier, who died at Puzzoli, after an unsuccessful attempt to preserve the kingdom of Naples, under Charles the eighth. He was born on the 17th of February 1490. His elder brother, Louis de Montpensier, by
one

1521.

Qualities of this nature are not calculated to raise their possessors in courts, and least of all

one of the most wonderful and unexampled instances of filial piety which history has ever preserved, expired almost on the tomb of his father, from the exquisite feelings of distress. Having gone to pray at the tomb near Puzzoli, the silence and solitude of the place so powerfully affected his imagination, and the grief for his father's loss which it inspired and renewed, operated so violently on him, that he was seized with a fever, of which he died at Naples, to which city he was immediately transported. His younger brother Francis fell at the battle of Marignano.—The French writers all assert, in terms more or less positive, that the Countess d'Angoulême had given him the most unequivocal proofs of her attachment to him; and that the indifference he at first express'd, and the disdain with which he afterwards treated her passion, proved the source of all his future indignities and calamities.

By his marriage with Susanna, daughter to Anne, lady of Beaujeu, and duchess of Bourbon, he inherited the immense possessions of that house; his own paternal fortunes being small. Louis the twelfth had chiefly conducted to form this union, by his authority and personal interposition. When the nuptials were solemnized, the young duchess made a solemn and formal contract, by which in case of her decease, she appointed Charles her husband her successor, and endow'd him with all her lands, rights, and pretensions. The nature of this donation in presence of the reigning foreign, and confirmed by his express consent and approbation, seemed to secure it from any doubts respecting its validity; but as Susanna, at the time of the bequest, wanted two or three months to be of age, this unimportant and unnecessary form became eventually the pretext, on which Louisa and the Chancellor du Prat founded their unjust pretensions. She died in childbed about eight years after her marriage, on the 28th April 1521, leaving no issue.

were

were they so in that of Francis the first. Bonni-
vet, admiral of France, who engrossed the royal
grace and patronage, and whose ascendancy over
his master's mind produced the most fatal con-
sequences to his country, is a convincing proof
of this assertion. He resembled Villiers, the first
duke of Buckingham, in many points of cha-
racter. As he was the handsomest nobleman of
the court, so he was likewise the most arrogant,
vain, and presumptuous: born with no talents
for war except personal courage, he yet had the
command of armies entrusted to his care. Gal-
lant and amorous, he was acceptable to wo-
men; and peculiarly so to Louisa of Savoy, un-
der whose protection he rose.—Pertinacious in
his adherence to his own schemes, and blinded
by his high opinion of himself, he never yielded
to the advice of others, however disinterested or
judicious; yet ministering with address to his so-
vereign's passion for pleasures and dissipation, he
acquired, and retained an almost unlimited in-
fluence over him*. Being sent into Navarre at
the

1521.

* William Gouffier, Sieur de Bonnivet, and better known
in history under the title of the admiral Bonnivet, was the
younger brother of Arthur de Gouffier-Boisy, preceptor and
governor to Francis the first. He distinguish'd himself in
the wars of Italy under Louis the twelfth, where he served
with reputation. He possess'd neither the moderation or wis-
dom of his elder brother, tho' he enjoy'd a distinguished place
in the favour of Francis, who sent him ambassador to Henry
the eighth in 1519, and created him in the same year grand

P

admiral

1521. the head of a considerable body of forces, he
October. besieged and took the city of Fontarabia. In
 wise policy, the fortifications should have been
 instantly demolished; but Bonnivet proud of his
 conquest, and desirous of perpetuating its re-
 nown, would not listen to the remonstrances of
 the duke of Guise on that point. The place was
 therefore garrisoned, and soon after retaken by
 the Spaniards.

But in Italy, where the emperor and Leo the
 tenth had openly declared hostilities, the ope-
 rations of the war drew Francis's chief attention.
 He had entrusted the government of the Mi-
 lanese to Odet de Foix, Viscount of Lautrec, and
 brother to his mistress, the countess of Chateau-
 Briant *. This nobleman, to whom so impor-
 tant

admiral of France. His ascendancy over the king's mind,
 his rivalry to the Constable of Bourbon, to whose office he
 aspired, and his impetuous counsels, had nearly brought the
 French monarchy to the brink of ruin.

* We know very little with certainty relative to this lady,
 or the manner of her first becoming connected with the king.
 Her name was Françoise de Foix. She was born about the
 year 1495, and was married to the Seigneur de Laval in
 Bretagne, when scarce twelve years of age. She was pos-
 sessed of the greatest personal beauty, united to all the ac-
 complishments of the age in which she flourished. The exact
 æra of her first appearance at the court of France is not as-
 certain'd. She became, however, early in the present reign,
 the declared favourite of the king; and from her ascendancy
 over him, more than from the personal merit or talents of

tant a charge was confided, possessed scarce any 1521. qualities to justify the choice, except his sister's favour with the king. He surpassed even Bonivet in haughtiness, and had already disgusted the great feudatory lords of the duchy, by the insolence of his behaviour*.

At the time when the papal and imperial armies entered the Milanese, Lautrec was in

her three brothers, they were advanced to the highest military commands, in Navarre, in the Milanese, and in the kingdom of Naples. Her influence appears to have lasted till the king's campaign into Italy, which was followed by the battle of Pavia. Mademoiselle de Heilly, better known by the title of duchess d'Estampes, succeeded to her place on Francis's return from his prison at Madrid. Her death has been the subject of much inquiry and romance. It is pretended without reason, that her veins were opened by her husband's command, about six months after the battle of Pavia, at the castle of Chateau-Briant in Bretagne. This is however totally disproved by the inscription on her tomb in the church of the Mathurins of that place, by which it appears that she died on the 16th of October 1537. She had no children by the king.

* Odet de Foix was the eldest of the three brothers of François de Foix, mistress to Francis the first. He is very celebrated in the history of this reign. At the battle of Ravenna in 1512, he was left upon the field as dead; but being found, and carried to Ferrara, he recover'd of his wounds. In 1521, he took the cities of Brescia and Verona, while governor of the Milanese. To his severities, negligence, and misconduct, may in a great measure be attributed the disgraces of the French in that duchy, and its subsequent loss.

1521. France, having left his brother Lescun, commonly called the Marechal de Foix, to supply his place. The king, anxious for the preservation of his Italian dominions, would have instantly sent him back, but he, conscious of the disorder which Francis's profusion and his mother's unsatisfied rapacity had introduced into the finances, absolutely refused to set out for his government, till the necessary funds for the payment of his troops were provided: nor till he had received the most solemn and reiterated assurances from Louisa, Francis's mother, and from those who superintended the public treasures, that the money should follow him, would he begin his journey. Upon his arrival on the banks of the Po, the enemy retired before him in confusion; but by the neglect of those advantages which their distressed situation and mutinous spirit repeatedly offered him, he was reduced in his turn to retreat, after having lost the city of Milan, besides Parma, Placentia, and several inferior places, the castle of Milan alone holding out for France. The joy which Leo the tenth felt at this intelligence, produced an agitation of spirits so violent, that it was followed by a fever, of which he died on the fifth day from his seizure*.

Decem-
ber.

This

* Leo the tenth, so celebrated in the annals of the pontificate and of letters, was son to the immortal Lorenzo de Medecis,

This event, so unexpected, and so injurious to the emperor, ought naturally to have re-established the affairs of Francis; but the very misfortune which Lautrec had dreaded, and even in some degree predicted, destroy'd these flattering appearances. The Countess d'Angoulesme, by a conduct the most pernicious to her son, the most derogatory to her honour and the interests of the Medecis, and inherited all his father's taste for the arts. He was born in 1477, and succeeded to Julius the second at the age of thirty-six years. His reign will be for ever memorable for the revolt of Luther from the Romish church. He was taken prisoner by the French at the battle of Ravenna; and having afterwards joined the league against Francis the first, he often used to say, that "he should die content, if he only saw Parma and Placentia recovered from that prince."—The agitation occasion'd by the pleasure he felt on receiving this welcome news, was such, that he was seized with a slight fever the same evening. He was at one of his voluptuous retreats near Rome, call'd Magliano, and caused himself to be immediately removed to that city. The physicians at first treated his disorder as slight, but it encreased, and put an end to his life in a few days, on the 2d of December 1521. His cup-bearer, Barnabo, marquis of Malespina, was strongly suspected of having poison'd him, and was thrown into prison on the imputation of that crime; but the Cardinal de Medecis, who was afterwards pope Clement the seventh, on his arrival at Rome, caused him to be released, and no further enquiry to be made into the circumstances of Leo's death. He was a magnificent and voluptuous prince, a patron of all the arts, and endowed with talents for government; but his debaucheries and infidelity rendered him scarce more proper for the pontifical chair, than either of his predecessors, Julius or Alexander.

1521. state, had diverted to her own use the funds destined for the payment of the troops in Italy. The precise motives which induced her to this violation of the promises she had made, are somewhat ambiguous and doubtful. Hatred of the Countess de Chateau-Briant and her brother Lautrec, as well as the desire of procuring the command of the army in the Milanese for her own brother, the Bastard of Savoy, are commonly assigned as the reasons. The money, amounting to three hundred thousand crowns, had been deposited with Semblençai, who was Superintendant of the finances; but Louisa demanded it with such earnestness, and threatened the Superintendant with so severe a vengeance in case he refus'd, that, overcome by the menaces she used, and reposing on her assurances of protection in case of the king's displeasure, he yielded to her importunity. The total loss of the Milanese was the consequence of this iniquitous abuse of her authority. Lautrec, unassisted with the money which had been promised him, could scarcely maintain himself in the duchy; while Francisco Sforza, youngest son to Ludoyico, and the last of that family, being receiv'd into Milan, and supported by the army of Colonna and the affections of his own subjects, strengthened himself in his new acquisition.—Lescun, whom his brother had dispatched into France with the account of his distress, arrived at length, but arrived too late.

late. That favourable occasion, which presents itself in the affairs of war, was already irretrievably lost. 1522.

Repeated and unsuccessful efforts destroyed the forces of Lautrec. After having been compelled by the seditious murmurs of the Swiss troops in his army to give battle reluctantly at the village of La Bicoque near Milan, where a defeat was inevitable, and having in vain laid siege to Pavia, he sunk under his adverse fortune. Every resource being exhausted, and winter hastening on, he quitted the Milanese, and returned into France, only attended by two domestics. His brother Lescun was immediately invested in Cremona, and forc'd to capitulate; Francisco Sforza was re-established in his dominions; the principal places in the duchy received the imperialists, and even Genoa revolting expelled the French. April.

When Lautrec arrived at court, Francis refused to admit him to his presence, or to hear his justification; but having, by means of the Constable of Bourbon, found an opportunity of speaking to his majesty, he accused the Superintendant of the finances, Semblençai, with having occasioned all the disasters of the campaign, by withholding the promised supplies. Semblençai, terrified, and incapable of making any other defence, threw the blame upon the king's mother; but Louisa, adding the basest inhu-

1522.

manity to all her other faults, found means to exculpate herself, and to persuade her son that only Semblençai was criminal. Judges were appointed to examine into this affair, and the Chancellor du Prat was among the number. Destitute of integrity, and not actuated by any principle of justice or honour, he was devoted to the interests of the Countess d'Angoulesme, and procured Semblençai's condemnation. This unfortunate minister, far advanced in years, who had grown grey under four successive princes, and whom Francis used to honour with the endearing and respectful appellation of his father, was led out to punishment and ignominiously executed. Lautrec himself, disgraced, was ordered to repair to his government of Guyenne*.

Notwith-

* The most candid and impartial survey must, all circumstances considered, acquit Lautrec of blame respecting the loss of the Milanese. He remained with his troops till they became so mutinous and discontented, that he was in imminent danger of being seized by them, as a pledge for the payment of their arrears; and he was obliged to pass disguised through Switzerland, in his return to France. The Constable of Bourbon, not without great difficulty, procured him at length an audience of the king in council, by declaring to his majesty, that Lautrec could fully justify himself; and would disclose some extraordinary secrets, with which it imported him deeply to be made acquainted.

Lautrec when introduced into the royal presence, preserved his native haughtiness of deportment; and even presumed to complain highly to his master of his ungracious reception. Francis was covered with astonishment

Notwithstanding his past misfortunes, and in defiance of almost all the great powers of Europe combined against him, the king persisted in his resolution to recover the Milanese. He sent his favourite the admiral Bonnivet over the Alps, and had intended to command the army in person destined for this enterprize, when a conspiracy the most alarming and important checked his designs, and compelled him to watch over the tranquillity of his kingdom;— I mean, the defection and revolt of the constable of Bourbon.

ment at the recital of his story. He ordered Semblençai to be instantly sent for; but in the interval which elapsed between this order and his appearance, he reproached Lautrec with incapacity and with precipitation in abandoning the Milanese, notwithstanding the disappointment in his remittances; and added insultingly, that Colonna and Pescara, the imperial commanders, had been no better or more punctually supplied. To these charges Lautrec modestly replied; and was engaged in his exculpation, when Semblençai arrived. The king gave him a look of indignation at his entrance, and demanded if the facts alledged against him were true. On the accusation of his mother as the origin of all these evils, his amazement and fury were heightened. Louisa was summoned, and appeared. Semblençai repeated before her his justification. The Countess, unawed either by her own consciousness of its veracity, or by the presence of the king, gave a loose to the most unbounded resentment against the unfortunate treasurer, and scrupled not to accuse him of a lye, and to insist on his being punish'd as a traitor who had aspersed her honour.—Semblençai's ruin and execution were the consequence of this iniquitous and foul transaction.

If

1523.

If ever treason was palliated by the circumstances which attended or produced it—if such a crime can admit of any apology or defence, it must be in the person of Charles of Bourbon. This nobleman, whom his high birth, his qualities, his power and offices under the crown ought to have raised above the persecution of any individual, had been marked out by the Countess d'Angoulesme's unrelenting desire of revenge. The contempt with which he had refused her hand and person which she offered him, superadded to the sentiments of detestation which he avowed for her character, had inflamed her to a pitch of resentment, which could only be satisfy'd by his ruin. Bonnivet, ambitious of succeeding him in his office of Constable, and hoping to obtain it by his disgrace, joined the Countess; and Du Prat, the most corrupt and vicious minister to whom the seals were ever confided, lent his assistance to complete the scheme.

Louisa, not content with having prevented his marriage with the princess Renée, youngest daughter to Louis the twelfth, and sister of the queen, determined to strike at the root of his greatness, by laying claim to the vast possessions which he held in right of his wife Susanna of Bourbon, daughter to the famous Lady of Beaujeu, Regent under Charles the eighth. She succeeded in this attempt, though in contradiction

dition to equity, and by a perversion of every sacred or binding institution. 1523.

The unhappy Constable, oppressed by unmerited severity, and driven to despair by a series of unparalleled insults, sacrificed his loyalty to his desire of vengeance, and entered into a treaty with the emperor. Charles the fifth, who knew his value, and the important consequences which might ensue from the acquisition of such a friend, agreed to, and even exceeded all his demands *.

Francis

* Adrian de Croy, Count de Rieux, and first gentleman of the bedchamber, was the person employed by the emperor to carry on the negotiation with Bourbon. He passed through France disguised as a peasant, and arrived by night at Chantelle, the Constable's castle in Auvergne, where he lay in an adjoining apartment to him, and settled the terms previous to his revolt. Charles of Bourbon, not satisfied with the powers granted to the Count de Rieux, and desirous of entering into more exact conditions with the emperor, dispatched La Mothe de Noyers, a gentleman in his service, into Spain. He returned, bringing with him the most ample and general ratification of all his demands. Bourbon buried the papers in a box under ground, at the foot of a tree; and began to assemble his partizans and vassals, under pretence of accompanying the king on his march into Italy. Matignon and d'Argouges, two gentlemen of that number, and who were privy to their lord's conspiracy, having confessed at Easter, and enumerated among their other transgressions a plot against the state in which they were engaged, the priest commended them instantly to discover it to their sovereign, and set out immediately himself to impart this interesting

1523.

Francis received advice of this dangerous conspiracy as he was on his rout to Lyons, with the intention of crossing the Alps; and he instantly took the resolution of coming to an explanation with the Constable in person. He went to him at Moulins, and informed him candidly of the imputation laid to his charge: Bourbon denied his having accepted the emperor's offers, though he confessed overtures had been made to shake his allegiance. As this confession was sufficient to justify his seizure, it was either owing to the king's generosity, and his consciousness how unworthily Bourbon had been treated, or to his inability to arrest so powerful a lord, surrounded by his vassals who almost adored him, that he was not immediately committed to custody. Francis only commanded the Constable to follow him to Lyons. Bourbon affected to obey; and being somewhat indisposed, began his journey in a litter. While he was on the road, intelligence was brought him that the parliament, in pursuance of a sentence passed against him, had ordered all his lands to be sequestered. Notwithstanding this information, he yet attempted to

interesting intelligence to Brezé, Senechal of Normandy. The gentlemen believing themselves lost, and conscious that their confession could alone preserve their lives, mounted on horseback, and meeting Francis at St. Pierre-le-Moutier in the Bourbonnois, threw themselves at his feet, and made an ingenuous disclosure of the whole transaction.

ward

1523.

ward off the blow ; and hoping to obtain that from Francis's magnanimity which Louisa refused, he dispatched the bishop of Autun to implore that this decree might at least be suspended ; and to assure the king that such an act of grace and tenderness would bind him for ever to his service. Had this request been granted, there is the greatest reason to suppose, that it would have retained him in his allegiance ; but by the inveterate animosity of his enemies, who had resolved on his destruction, the bishop was arrested at only two leagues distance*.

The

* The minutest circumstances respecting the flight of so great a man become interesting.—When the bishop of Autun was seized by the Marechal de Chabannes, a footman rode in all haste to give the Constable information of it. He was then at his castle of Chantelle. The instant he received this news, he set out by night for Herment, a little town of Auvergne, where Henry Arnauld, a gentleman attached to him, was governor. He arrived when it was dark, and immediately awoke Pomperant and Montagnac-Tenzane.—The former of these owed his life to him ; for having killed Chisay, a celebrated gallant of the court, Bourbon sheltered him, and afterwards procured his pardon.—Tenzane, aged near eighty years at this time, remained inviolably attached to him in his misfortunes, though he had ever opposed and been averse to his treaty with the emperor. It was requisite that one of them should accompany him, while the other remained behind, to favour his flight. As the latter employment was by far the most hazardous, it became a subject of contest, both desiring ardently this desperate commission. Chance alone decided it in favour of Tenzane.

1523. The Constable losing all expectation of soothing Francis, after so manifest a declaration of his intentions, returned to his castle of Chantelle; and hearing that four thousand men were on their march to invest him, he quitted it at night by the light of torches. After having walked some way, he contrived to deceive his attendants, and withdrew from them unobserved. They, attached to their lord in his misfortunes, would not abandon him; and continued to follow Francis de Montagnac-Tenzane who had taken his horse and dress, in the belief that it was the Constable himself. Day-break shewed them their mistake; and Tenzane, addressing them with tears, informed them that their master had taken another road; that he thanked them

He executed it with the most consummate address; and having concealed himself during six weeks in a castle of Auvergne, he then cut off his beard which he had always been accustomed to wear long, and under the disguise of an ecclesiastic, passing thro' Franche Comté, rejoined his lord safely in the Milanese. The Constable and Pomperant crossed all the county of Burgundy, having only made use of one precaution, that of shoeing their horses backwards. They were more than once on the point of being discovered and seized near Grenoble in Dauphiné.—The Cardinal de la Baume, abbot of St. Claude in Franche Comté, gave them an escort as soon as they arrived on the frontiers of the emperor's dominions. Not daring to pass thro' Switzerland, then in alliance with France, Bourbon was necessitated to go considerably round thro' Germany to Trent, from whence he arrived safely at Mantua.

for

for their unshaken fidelity and affection, and besought them to repair to their own houses till farther order.—Meanwhile Bourbon continued his flight. Only one gentleman accompanied him, named Pomperant. He soon gained the province of Franche Comté, and from thence passing through Trent to Mantua, arrived safe at Genoa. No revolt or rebellion succeeded; nor did the king make any particular enquiries after the accomplices or abettors of the Constable's intrigues. Shame and generosity pleading in his bosom for his injured subject, probably prevented him from any rigorous measures.

Amidst these convulsions of the state, died 1524.
Claude queen of France. Historians, entirely 25th July.
occupied with the number of battles and public transactions which diversify this reign, have scarce deigned to commemorate her death. She was called, "The good Queen," from her many amiable qualities and virtues; but her person did not correspond with the beauty of her mind. She was somewhat lame, like her mother Anne of Bretagne; and in other respects little calculated to retain the affections of a husband, gallant, inconstant, and fond of pleasure. She neither interfered in affairs of policy, nor possessed any ascendancy over the king. The Countess d'Angoulême engrossed the whole authority. Her death was accelerated, if not even entirely occasion'd by a disease which Francis communicated

to

1524. to her, and which was the result of his irregular and promiscuous intercourse with women. She expired at the castle of Blois, when only twenty-four years old, and after having borne seven children *.

Though the fear of some intestine commotion prevented the king from entering Italy in person at this time, yet Bonnivet continued his march, and reached the Milanese, unopposed. Had he pursued the advantages which his unexpected appearance, and the disorder among the imperial troops afforded him, the whole duchy might have been regained to France; but he neglected them, till the approach of winter, and the plague, which made a rapid

* Claude, daughter of Louis the twelfth, was born on the 13th of October 1499. Her amiable and virtuous character, added to the rich province of Bretagne which she brought in marriage to Francis, might have claimed a better treatment than she met with from him. All the historians her cotemporaries unite in paying the highest encomiums to her piety, liberality, courtesy, and sweetness of disposition. She was regarded as a saint after her decease. The king received the news of her death as he was preparing for his expedition into Italy; but it did not prevent his continuing his march.—Brantome, and other authors assert in the most positive manner, that the king caused her death by a disorder which he had himself received, and communicated to her. The repugnance which her mother Anne of Bretagne always manifested to this marriage, was too much justified by Francis's subsequent conduct. It seems a singular retribution, that he himself should eventually have fallen a victim to the attacks of the same disease.

progress

progress among his soldiery, obliged him to retire. Bourbon, to whom the emperor Charles had confided the supreme command of his armies in conjunction with Lannoy the viceroy of Naples, and the Marquis of Pescara, followed the admiral with that impetuosity, which the desire of vengeance on his declared and mortal enemy, naturally inspired. Bonnivet, wounded in the arm, and dreading more than death to fall into the Constable's hands, left Bayard, so renowned in the annals of chivalry, to cover the retreat of his forces; and putting himself into a litter, arrived safe at Lyons *. Bayard executed the charge committed to him with that noble

* Bonnivet appears, throughout this whole campaign, to have been still more unfortunate, than blameable. He made a very masterly and judicious disposition to cover the retreat of the French army over the river Sessia, when it was no longer possible to oppose the passage of the Imperial troops.

When Bourbon and Pescara attempted to attack the admiral, he placed himself at the head of the rear guard, as being the post of danger and honour; nor did he quit his station, till he received a wound in the arm from a musket ball, which was attended with a great loss of blood, and totally incapacitated him for the command. He then called the chevalier Bayard, the Count de St. Pol, and Vandenesse into his tent, and addressing himself to Bayard, "You see," said he, "that I am no longer in a state either to fight, or to command. I commit the army to your care. Extricate it, if it be possible." "Il est bien tard," answered Bayard, who neither loved nor esteemed the admiral, "mais
Q " n'importe.

1524. noble intrepidity which has immortalized his name, but he fell in the execution of it at Romagnano; and after his death, the French having totally evacuated Italy, every place in the Milanese returned to the obedience of the emperor*.

These

“n’importe. Mon ame est a Dieu, et ma vie a l’Etat. Je vous promets de sauver l’Armée au depens de mes jours.”—Bonnivet immediately quitted the camp.—The retreat of the French was made in admirable order by Bayard; and if that celebrated commander had not unfortunately fallen in the discharge of this commission, the disposition made by Bonnivet would have been highly applauded. The Imperialists gained neither honour nor trophies. No baggage, or artillery was lost, and very few soldiers were killed.

* The Chevalier Bayard, who fell in the service of his country at Romagnano, was one of the most heroic and elevated spirits, who flourished in the ages of chivalry. His exploits, his gallantry, his munificence, and his whole character are more in the spirit of romance, than in the sober genius of history. He descended from a line of warriors, who for four succeeding generations died in battle, at Poitiers, at Azincourt, at Monthery, and at Guinegate.—Bayard first distinguished himself under the reign of Charles the eighth, at the action of Fornova; and during the reign of Louis the twelfth, he was in almost every engagement. At the attack of Brescia by Gaston de Foix, in 1512, he was dangerously wounded. The instances related of his humanity and beneficence even to his enemies, would excite admiration and astonishment in any age; but are almost incredible, when we consider the barbarous manner in which war was carried on, in the beginning of the sixteenth century.

—The

1524.

These successes induced Bourbon to enter Provence. His own intentions were to have penetrated without delay into the interior provinces of the kingdom, where he expected to have been joined by all his own vassals; but Lannoy and Pescara, Charles's generals, who were attentive only to their master's interests, compelled him to adopt other counsels, and laid siege to Marseilles. The place was gallantly and obstinately defended; and after a blockade of six weeks, the Imperial commanders, alarmed at Francis's approach with a considerable army, raised the siege in confusion; and re-embark-

—The circumstances of his death have been the subject of historical eulogium, and have been immortalized by painters and artists. He received a ball from an arquebuse in the reins, and immediately cried out, "Jesús, mon Dieu! Je suis mort." He then prepared himself for his approaching dissolution, with that composure and magnanimity which characterized all his actions. He held up his sword before him to supply the want of a crucifix, confessed himself to his steward, as no priest was to be found, and comforted his friends and servants under the loss which they were about to sustain. The duke of Bourbon weeping over him, Bayard, when expiring, made him that memorable reproach, "Weep not for me," said he to the Constable, "I die in the service of my country: you triumph in the ruin of yours; and have far more cause to lament your victory, than my defeat."

The marquis of Pescara paid him all funeral honours, and joined in the general lamentation which even the soldiers of the Imperial army made, for the death of this illustrious personage.

1524. ing the greater part of their artillery, retreated with expedition across the mountains, into Italy.

The king, naturally sanguine, and easily elated by the favours of fortune, determined to follow the Constable by forced marches. Bonnivet urged him to this rash project, and represented to him the condition of the Milanese left defenceless and unprotected, together with the precipitate retreat of the flying Imperialists*. His oldest and wisest generals, on the other hand, opposed weighty reasons to dissuade him from so dangerous an enterprize. They represented to him the state of his kingdom, left open to the invasions

* Besides these public reasons, it is said that a private motive, not improbable in a prince of the character of Francis the first, stimulated him to this fatal march into the Milanese. It is pretended that Bonnivet, who always mixed gallantry with the toils of war, had inflamed his sovereign with a desire to visit and enjoy a beautiful and noble lady of Milan, on whose personal charms he had lavished the highest encomiums; nor is this story so improbable, or ill-founded, as at first we may be inclined to suppose. Brantome, who was well acquainted with the intrigues of Francis's court, asserts it in the most positive manner, as a secret known to few. He says, that her name was, "La Signora Clerice," a noble lady of Milan, and esteemed one of the finest women in Italy; that Bonnivet had obtained from her the last favours some years before, and inspired the king with the same desire. The more we consider the characters of Francis and of the admiral, the more are we inclined to credit this narration.

of

of the emperor and the king of England; the near approach of winter, and advanced season of the year. Louisa of Savoy, as if from a prescience of the calamities which her son's conduct would entail upon France, used every method to prevent his march. As soon as she received notice of his intention to enter Italy, she dispatched three successive couriers to stop him; or if that could not be done, at least to implore him to wait till she had embraced him, and bid him adieu. The king was deaf to her entreaties or remonstrances; and ordered her to be informed by the last messenger, that he was too far advanced to think of suspending his progress, but that he invested her with the regency during his absence.

1524.

Francis's entry into the Milanese spread even greater terror, than that of Bonnivet and Lautrec had done in former campaigns. Bourbon, pursued in turn by his adversary, and flying before those whom he had so lately driven, scarce could with difficulty avoid being overtaken. The French followed so close upon his steps, that their troops even entered one of the gates of Milan, only half an hour after he had escaped by another; and had not the king injudiciously allowed the Imperial forces time to recover from the consternation into which he had thrown them, no exertion of military skill in Charles's commanders could have prevented their defeat, or

September.

1524. mutiny and separation. Unhappily, the admiral's advice and ascendancy over his sovereign prevented him from embracing this salutary line of conduct; and he prevailed on Francis, in opposition to the general voice of his oldest officers, to undertake the siege of Pavia.—

1525. The vigorous and masterly defence made by the
January. celebrated Antonio de Leyva who commanded in the place, superadded to the imprudence of the king in making great detachments from his army for the conquest of Naples and reduction of Genoa, rendered the siege long and difficult. Meanwhile, the Constable of Bourbon, ever active, and stimulated by the desire of approving his zeal for the emperor, had levied on his own private credit twelve thousand veteran Germans, whom he brought to the aid of Lannoy and Pescara, the Imperial commanders. Thus reinforced, they determined to give battle to Francis immediately. Had he only remained patiently in his entrenchments before Pavia, the generals of Charles the fifth must have received the severest chastisement for their temerity; but, carried away by the impetuosity of his courage, and by the rash counsels of Bonnivet, he ventured to march out of his camp, to pursue the repulsed and broken Imperialists. His total and entire defeat was the consequence of this destructive resolution, which involved himself and his kingdom in the most complicated distress. The French army,
which

which had only ten years before triumphed at Marignano under Francis's command, was totally cut in pieces, or driven out of Italy. Their bravest and ablest generals fell in the engagement, and the king himself remained a prisoner in the hands of Lannoy, viceroy of Naples. 1525.

The king gave, notwithstanding, in that celebrated engagement, the most distinguished proofs of personal courage and prowess; nor was it to any want of military virtue, that his misfortunes are to be imputed. The number and the quality of those whom he killed with his own hand, are incontestable evidences of this assertion *. His armour rendered him distinguished in the field, by its richness and splendour; whereas Bourbon, more cautious and circumspect, fought in the habit of a private cavalier, having given the command of his troop to Pomperant. When thrown from his horse, wounded in many places, exhausted, and almost deserted by his followers, Francis continued to defend himself with the most heroic valour, 'till two Spanish gentlemen, named Diego d'Avila, and Juan d'Orbieta, put their swords to his throat. In this exigency, a follower of Bourbon's, named La Mothe de Noyers,

* In the beginning of the engagement, the king killed Ferdinand Castriot, Marquis of Saint Ange, who was the grandson of the famous Scanderbeg, and last descendant of the kings of Albania. Five other persons fell by his own hand during the action.

1525. came up, and recognizing the king, though his face was covered with blood from a deep wound which he had received across his forehead, called out to him to surrender to the Constable, who was not far off; but disdainingly to deliver up his sword to a man whom he regarded as a traitor, he refused, and asked for Lannoy. While La Mothe ran every where in hopes to find his lord, the viceroy of Naples arrived on the spot, and received Francis's submissions. The king immediately delivered up his sword to him, which Lannoy accepted on his knee, and having kissed Francis's hand, presented him with another sword. His arrival at the precise time when the king surrendered, was even peculiarly fortunate for his royal captive, as Bourbon would certainly have taken him by force, from any person in the army, of inferior authority or distinction.

Diego d'Avila first pulled off his gauntlets, and the surrounding crowd despoiled him of his coat of mail, his belt, and spurs.—Meanwhile the Marquis del Gualto approached the king, and saluted him with great respect; and, as Francis requested with peculiar earnestness, that he might not be led into the city of Pavia, as an object of mockery to the inhabitants, the Marquis conducted him to his own tent. The wounds he had received in the action were inspected, and carefully dressed; of which, one very deep wound was near his eyebrow, another in
his

his leg, and a third in his right hand. Besides these, he had received several balls from a harquebuste in his cuirass, and a most severe contusion from the fall of his horse upon him, who was killed by one of those balls. The Marquis del Guasto had the honour to sup with him, and Charles of Bourbon presented the napkin to his Majesty. The Spanish historians declare that he received it very graciously, and even permitted the Constable to kiss his hand on the knee; but the French writers assert the contrary, and say that Francis turned his back on him with contempt, and would not accept the napkin from him. During his repast, the discourse naturally turned on the past action; and Francis, with infinite modesty, propriety, and eloquence, pointed out the causes which had conduced to its loss, and chiefly blamed the cowardice of the Swiss and Italian troops in his army. When he retired to rest, none of his attendants being near to assist him to undress, the Sieur de Montpezat, a gentleman of the province of Quercy, who had been made prisoner by a Spanish soldier, presented himself to perform that office; and the king, pleased with his assiduity and attention, retained him near his person, redeemed him from captivity, and raised him afterwards to the dignity of a Marechal of France.

Many great commanders perished on that memorable

1525. memorable day; * of which number, Lescun and
Bonnivet

* The old Marechal de Chabannes, who had been distinguished in every battle under Charles the eighth and Louis the twelfth, having had his horse killed under him in this action, was made prisoner while he fought on foot, by Castaldo, who commanded the Neapolitan cavalry under the Marquis of Pescara.—As Castaldo was conducting him to a place of safety, he was met by a Spanish captain, named Buzarto, who judging by the richness of the coat of mail which the Marechal wore, that he was a prisoner of distinction, demanded of Castaldo to be associated to the profit of his prize. A dispute arose on this subject, and as Castaldo persisted to refuse any participation of his captive's ransom, Buzarto, with an inhumanity the most atrocious, shot the unhappy Marechal with a harquebussé, and laid him dead at his feet.

The Bastard of Savoy, natural brother to Louisa, Francis's mother, fell in this memorable battle, covered with wounds. He was found after a long search, buried under a heap of dead bodies, and as he still retained some signs of life, he was carried to Pavia; but all the art of surgery only sufficed to prolong his existence a few days, and to make him expire in the most acute torments.

The Count de Saint Pol was saved by a very singular accident. He was left on the field, deprived of his senses from loss of blood, and mingled with the dead. A Spanish soldier, who was employed in stripping and plundering the bodies of those who had fallen in the battle, attempted to tear away a valuable ring which the Count de Saint Pol wore on his finger; but not being able to effect it, he drew out a knife to cut off the finger itself. The pain and effusion of blood brought the Count to life. He recovered his senses, informed the soldier of his name and quality, and warned

Bonnivet were among the chief*. The latter ex-
piated in some measure, his fatal advice, by the
intrepidity

1525.

warned him to conceal that a prince of the blood of France was his prisoner, as the Imperial commanders would undoubtedly take him away by force from a common soldier. To this advice, he added a promise of a considerable ransom, if the soldier concealed, and conducted him safely to France. Induced by these motives, the man followed the Count's directions, carried him to Pavia, and as soon as his wounds permitted him to mount on horseback, he attended the Count de Saint Pol into France, and received the recompence of his services.

Richard de la Pole, duke of Suffolk, descended from the house of York, and who had long wandered in exile, fell likewise on that fatal day. He commanded the corps of five thousand men, originally raised by the duke of Gueldres, in 1515, and surnamed, "The Black Bands." The duke of Suffolk was suffocated under a heap of dead bodies.

The Marechal de Montmorenci, tho' he was not in the action, was made prisoner; he had been detached on the evening preceding the battle, to Saint Lazaro. He immediately returned, on hearing the firing between the two armies; but before he could reach the scene of action, a corps of the Imperial troops surrounded, and made him captive.

* Lescun, commonly called the Marechal de Foix, had received a wound from a ball during the action, which shattered his arm and shoulder. He was not less the declared and inveterate enemy of Bonnivet, than the Constable of Bourbon himself. Exhausted with the loss of blood, and conscious that he was mortally wounded, he became furious with resentment against the admiral, whom he regarded as the fatal adviser of Francis, and as the cause of all the calamities of his country. Only anxious to punish him before

1525. intrepidity and courage with which he devoted himself to death. Seeing the fortune of the battle waver, and the troops disposed to fly, he attempted to rally the Swiss bands, and a body of cavalry; but not being able to succeed, and no hope of victory or even retreat remaining, he raised the vizor of his helmet that he might be universally known, and rushing into the thickest ranks of the enemy, opposed his breast to their swords, and fell, covered with honourable wounds. Bourbon had given express orders to take him alive, if possible; and in case that should not be possible, to kill him; but in no case to let him escape. After the engagement, his body was found; and the Constable standing over it, and having considered it long in silence, only exclaimed, "Ah! malheureux! Tu es cause de la ruine de la France, et de la mienne!*"

The

fore his own death, he fought Bonnivet over all the field, fully determined to plunge his sword into the bosom of that ill-fated man, and to enjoy the pleasure of having offered him up to the injured genius of France, before he expired himself. His strength, however, soon abandoned him, and falling from his horse, he was made prisoner, and carried to Pavia, to the house of the Countess Scarsafiore, to whom he had been fondly attached. His wounds were incurable. He languished some days, and expired in her arms.

* Nothing can have been more heroic, than the death of Bonnivet, in which was displayed all the haughtiness and despair of an elevated mind. He was separated from the king

The duke of Alençon, who had married the celebrated Margaret of Valois, only sister of Francis, behaved unworthy of his rank as a prince of the blood. He fled among the first, and retired to Lyons with a number of the nobility, where he died in a few days of grief and shame *. The 21st April.

king

king by the violent shock of the German lansquenets, who threw him out of the scene of action and danger. He might with ease have saved himself; but he disdained to preserve his life; and casting a melancholy look on the field of battle, he cried out, "Non! Je ne puis survivre a unpareil disastre." He presented his throat to the swords of the lansquenets, only anxious to meet an honourable death. The Constable of Bourbon's resentment, too justly founded, subsided at the sight of his bloody and disfigured remains.

* Charles, the last duke of Alençon, commanded the left wing of the French army, at the battle of Pavia. He was the first prince of the blood royal, being descended from Philip le Hardi, king of France, and had been married on the 9th of October 1509, to the celebrated Margaret of Valois, only sister of Francis. No part of his preceding life or conduct had given cause to distrust his personal courage. La Roche du Maine, his lieutenant, as well as the Baron de Trans, having in vain conjured him, by every possible motive of honour and loyalty, to lead on the left wing, which might still have changed the fortune of the day, and finding the duke inflexibly determined to sound a retreat, they both quitted him, and threw themselves into the thickest squadrons of the enemy, where La Roche du Maine was made prisoner. The duke of Alençon survived his own dishonour only a very short time. When he reached Lyons, where the court had remained since Francis's departure, he was treated with the most mortifying contempt by his wife, and upbraided with the severest reproaches by Louisa of Savoy.

1525. king of Navarre, Henry d'Albret, remained a prisoner in the hands of the Imperialists. *

Savoy. Incapable of sustaining this humiliating reception, and overcome by his own remorse, he sunk under such accumulated dishonour, and expired at Lyons, within two months from the fatal defeat of Pavia. He left no issue by Margaret of Valois, his wife, and in him was extinct the branch of Alençon.

* The young king of Navarre, Henry d'Albret, was made prisoner by the marquis of Pescara, who confined him in the castle of Pavia, and refused a hundred thousand crowns, which he offered to obtain his liberty. It is probable, that Charles the fifth, from motives of policy, would never have ransomed a prince, whose predecessor had been unjustly despoiled of his dominions by Ferdinand of Arragon, his own grandfather. Conscious of the impossibility of procuring his release from the generosity of the Emperor or of his general, Henry had recourse to stratagem, and corrupted two of his guards, who favoured his escape. Vivés his page, who had access to his person, came into his apartment under pretence of assisting to dress him: The king of Navarre then put on his page's cloaths, and under this disguise, passed out of the castle, without being discovered by the guards. Horses were prepared for him, and he had the good fortune to reach the territories of Savoy, unpursued. Vivés, meanwhile, having got into his master's bed, pretended at first to sleep; and afterwards, under pretext of being indisposed, kept the curtains close drawn till evening. The deceit was at length discovered, but too late to prevent the king of Navarre from escaping out of the Milanese. Henry d'Albret was married in January 1527, to Margaret of Valois, widow of Charles, duke of Alençon, by whom he had one daughter Jane d'Albret, who was queen of Navarre in her own right, and mother to the immortal Henry the fourth.

Lannoy

Lannoy was meanwhile in the utmost anxiety how to dispose of his royal captive. The day after the action, he conducted Francis to the castle of Pizzhigitonè, where he remained two months under the care of Don Fernand Alarçon. No positive orders arriving from the emperor's council in Spain for his removal to another fortress, the viceroy of Naples became more apprehensive of some accident, which might procure or terminate in his enlargement. The Imperial troops, who had scarcely received any pay, were disposed to mutiny, and might easily seize on Francis's person to ensure their arrears. To carry him to the castle of Naples, where he might have been securely detained, was a much more eligible plan; but he dreaded lest the Pope or the Venetians might attempt to rescue the king upon the road. It was still more hazardous to send him into Spain by sea, because the Genoese gallies commanded by Andrea Doria and those of France were stationed to intercept his passage.—Lannoy's address extricated him from these numerous difficulties. He found means to engage the king to adopt those measures of his own accord, which otherwise it would have been impossible to execute; and persuaded him that a personal interview with Charles the fifth was the speediest method of terminating so weighty an affair, and of procuring his freedom. Francis, who

1525. as he was generous himself, supposed others to have hearts equally enlarged, eagerly caught at this insidious proposal, and fell into the snare. To such a height of punctilious honour did he carry his sentiments, that he even opposed a sedition among the Imperial soldiery, of which he might have taken advantage; and not only commanded Doria to make no attempt on the Spanish vessels which conducted him from Italy, but order'd the regent his mother to lend seven gallies to Lannoy. About the middle of June they set sail from Portofiero, and arrived at Alicant. The king was brought under a strong guard to Madrid, and lodged in the castle *.

The

* It was by the most consummate exertion of artifice and policy, that Lannoy was enabled to execute the project of conducting Francis to Madrid. Bourbon and the Marquis of Pescara were equally averse to transporting him into Spain, as by that means he ceased to be their prisoner, and became more immediately the captive of the emperor. Lannoy, conscious of this difficulty, deceived the two generals, by pretending only to conduct Francis to the castle of Naples, where he would be securely guarded. Montmorenci was dispatched by the king to Marseilles, with directions to the regent Louisa, to give him the command of seven gallies, and to disarm the rest. Francis was to embark with Lannoy on board one of the French gallies, which were to be surrendered with sixteen Imperial gallies. Bourbon and Pescara, deceived by the viceroy of Naples, acquiesced in all these arrangements, and permitted him to carry off his prisoner. Lannoy appeared during the first two days

The consternation which Francis's defeat and captivity spread throughout the whole kingdom, is equalled by nothing in the French annals, except the capture of John King of France, at the

days to steer for Naples ; but stopping at Porto Veneré, and being there joined by Montmorenci with the French gallies, he then openly made sail for the coast of Spain. Francis had the mortification to pass in sight of the islands of Hieres on the coast of Provence, and saw his own dominions, without being able to land in them. A sedition arose among the soldiery on his arrival at Alicant ; and after having with menaces demanded their arrears from Lannoy, which he was unable to discharge, they proceeded to acts of the most outrageous violence. They even fired on the house where Francis and the viceroy resided. Lannoy instantly fled by a postern, while the king, who had very narrowly escaped being killed or wounded by the balls which entered his apartment, advanced to meet the mutinous soldiery, distributed some money among them, and by his expostulations induced them to return to their obedience.

Meanwhile, the emperor, to whom Lannoy had not communicated his resolution of transporting Francis into Spain, equally surprized and delighted at the masterly address of the viceroy, order'd his prisoner to be treated with every honour due to his high rank ; but at the same time caused him to be transferred to the fortress of Sciativa, in the kingdom of Valencia, a castle anciently appropriated by the kings of Arragon to the confinement of prisoners of state. Lannoy, leaving Francis under the custody of Don Fernand Alarçon, hastened to Madrid, where Charles received him with all possible demonstrations of honour and satisfaction. Fearful, however, of his prisoner being rescued if he was suffered to remain in a maritime province, and desirous to

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remove

1525. the battle of Poitiers, in 1356. Louisa, his mother exclaimed at the sad news, and at the recollection of her reiterated, but ineffectual efforts to stop his march over the Alps, " *Helas ! il ne m'a voulu croire ; ha ! que je lui avois tant dit !*"— Though oppressed with every private feeling of a parent, and originally the author of these calamities by her malevolent and unjust persecution of Bourbon ; though unpopular, and holding the regency in this convulsion of the state, by a tenure the most precarious, she nevertheless sustained her courage. She did even more ; and atoned in some measure for her past offences, by the wisdom, vigour, and magnanimity of her conduct. Henry the eighth of England, the republic of Venice, and the reigning pontiff, Clement the seventh, were all induced to quit the alliance of the emperor by her solicitations. She negotiated in every court, and moved all

remove him to a distance from the sea coast, Charles gave directions to conduct the king to Madrid. Bourbon and Pescara burst into the wildest transports of resentment and indignation, when they found how much they had been deceived by Lannoy, who had made them even accessory and subservient to his own views. Bourbon followed the viceroy to Madrid, and accused him to their common master, of cowardice, incapacity, and treachery. The emperor appears, however, to have paid little attention to these complaints and accusations, against a man from whom he had received so signal a service.

the springs which can actuate statesmen or politicians, to effect her son's release.

1525.

During these endeavours of the regent, Francis had time to discover and to repent of the error, into which he had been led by his romantic generosity and honour. Instead of the interview between him and the emperor with which he had been flattered; instead of treating with his conqueror, as from gentleman to gentleman; instead of that courteous and noble reception which he had expected, and which every part of his own behaviour had intitled him to receive, he found a solitary prison, guards inexorably vigilant, and a confinement unusually severe and rigorous *.—Charles did not even deign to visit him in this captivity; and the only recreation

* Soon after the news of the victory of Pavia, and the captivity of Francis, the emperor debated in council, on what terms he should liberate his prisoner, and what was the line of conduct which he should observe towards the king of France. The bishop of Osma, Charles's confessor, with a magnanimity of mind the most elevated and uncommon, advised his sovereign to set Francis free without exacting any ransom, and to conclude such a treaty with him as equity, generosity, and honour would dictate, and even cement. But the duke of Alva treated with ridicule these sentiments, which he represented as incompatible with, and contradictory to every maxim of wise policy. His advice prevailed in the Spanish cabinet, and in consequence of it the emperor dispatched Beaurein to Francis, then a prisoner in

1525. recreation permitted him, was to take the air on a mule, surrounded with soldiers. This ungenerous treatment towards his prisoner, which the emperor continued for six months, threw the king into a fever, the effect of disappointment and vexation. The arrival of Margaret, duchess of Alençon, his beloved sister, to whom the emperor had granted permission to visit Francis in this distressful situation, conducted principally to his recovery; and Charles himself, at length ashamed of his cruel insensibility, and terrified lest his prisoner's death might deprive him of the vast advantages which he doubted not to

the castle of Pizzighitoné, with conditions nearly resembling those which afterwards formed the treaty of Madrid. The immediate and absolute cession of the province of Burgundy on the part of Francis, was the leading feature of the propositions made by the emperor. The renunciation of his claims on the Milanese and the kingdom of Naples, as well as the re-establishment of the Constable of Bourbon in all his rights, to which were to be added the two provinces of Dauphiné and Provence, formed likewise an important part of the treaty. Francis, though in a condition the most unfortunate, rejected with indignation these hard propositions. On his arrival at Madrid the emperor therefore caused it to be signified to him, that it was not proper for them to see each other, 'till they had agreed on the conditions of the treaty; and the unhappy king was left to regret the credulous ear which he had lent to the promises and assurances of Lannoy, as well as the too favourable opinion which he had entertained of the generosity and magnanimity of the emperor.

derive

derive from his release, condescended to make him a short consolatory visit; in which he affected to express the utmost commiseration, and gave him hopes of speedy freedom*. These fallacious expectations vanished with the king's return of health; and, in despair of regaining his liberty, except on conditions so humiliating and ignominious as to preclude him from any acceptance of them, he entrusted a deed to his sister on her return, by which he resigned his kingdom to the Dauphin Francis; his

* Gattinara, the emperor's Chancellor, with sentiments of honour and delicacy that convey a high idea of his character, represented to his master, that if, after having so long declined and refused to grant a personal interview to his prisoner, he should visit him during his illness, it would be attributed to motives and feelings unworthy of so great a monarch. Charles, only apprehensive of losing his prize by death, and determined to limit his concessions to expressions of general consolation, persisted in his resolution to see the king. When the emperor entered the apartment, Francis, first breaking silence, said "Your imperial majesty is then come to see your prisoner expire?" "You are not my prisoner," answered the emperor, "but my friend and brother; nor have I any other intention than to grant you your liberty, and every other satisfaction you can desire."—These assurances, and the behaviour of Charles during the remainder of his visit, produced a rapid and favourable alteration in the state of Francis's health; but it was no sooner re-established, than the emperor resumed all his former coldness and inflexibility.

1525. eldest son. Margaret carried this act of resignation into France *.

1526. Charles, induced at length, not by sentiments
January. of generosity or greatness of mind, but from motives of interest and narrow policy; influenced by his knowledge of the state of the Milanese, which had been left defenceless by the death of the Marquis of Pescara †; and finding a powerful

* Margaret was received by the emperor on her arrival at Madrid, with every possible demonstration of respect, and even of affection. He appeared to take a peculiar pleasure in her conversation, and flattered her with expectations of her brother's speedy release.—But all these appearances were illusory and deceptive. The time limited to the safe conduct of the duchess of Alençon being nearly expired, she was necessitated to return into France. The king, resigning all hopes of procuring his release, except on terms so destructive to his kingdom, and so dishonourable to himself, that continual imprisonment appeared preferable to such an act of degradation, commanded Montmorenci and Brion to repair to his son the Dauphin, and to assist him with their counsels, while he himself, renouncing the crown of France, remained a prisoner in the emperor's hands. A greater instance of disinterested magnanimity of mind is, perhaps, scarcely to be found in the annals of history, since Francis by this act relinquished his throne and his liberty, to save his people.

† The Marquis of Pescara was one of the most illustrious commanders who adorned the reign, and advanced the glories of Charles the fifth.—He had been distinguished in every engagement from his earliest youth, and had acquired the

ful league formed for the release of Francis, entered seriously into a treaty with him. Even then he did not relax the rigor of his demands, though Gattinara, his Chancellor, foretold their certain violation, and refused, with firmness, to affix to them the seals.—The marriage of Francis to Charles's sister, Eleanor, widow of Emanuel, king of Portugal, formed the cement of this famous treaty; but the restitution of Burgundy to the emperor, was an article so injurious to the state, so ruinous and fatal in its nature, that the king protested against it in private, previous to his departure from Madrid *.

1526.
February.

After

the highest military reputation at the time of his death. The victory of Pavia was in a great degree due to his talents and abilities, even by the testimony of Francis the first himself. Previous to his decease, he had listened to propositions, and even entered into engagements, highly derogatory to his allegiance to the emperor. It is asserted by the cotemporary historians, that the object of this conspiracy was no less than to place the crown of Naples on his own head; but Pescara, either from perfidy or loyalty, deserted his friends, and even revealed the whole transaction to Charles. This duplicity, and the ambiguity of the motives which influenced his conduct in betraying his accomplices, have left a stain upon his memory, difficult to efface. Pescara died, while engaged in the siege of Milan, at the age of thirty-six years.

* Though we must allow the insufficiency of any concealed and private protestations on the part of Francis, to impugn the validity of a public treaty, or to justify its violation, yet much is to be said in palliation of the conduct of the king of France, from a consideration of the circumstances under

1526.

18th
March.

After a captivity of near thirteen months from the battle of Pavia, he was reconducted by his two keepers, Lannoy and Alarçon, to the bank

which he signed the treaty of Madrid. The long imprisonment which he had undergone, the ungenerous treatment which he had received, added to the nature of the principal article, which, as it supposed the consent of the states of Burgundy, might be beyond the power of Francis to fulfil; —All these combined facts operate strongly in diminishing the degree of condemnation, which we might otherwise affix to the evasion of so solemn an act of state.

Charles the fifth appears to have foreseen and expected that his prisoner, when liberated, would no longer adhere to, or execute the hard conditions which he signed. His conduct towards Francis, even a few days previous to the release of the latter prince, evidently proves the conflict of his mind, and his irresolution. Gattinara persisting in his determination not to affix the seals to so unwise and rigorous a treaty, Charles sealed it himself, with his own hand; but, instead of immediately liberating his captive, as the articles expressly stipulated, he detained the king above a month in prison after every form of the negotiation had been fulfilled. Francis, overcome by this new delay, and incapable of sustaining the continual procrastination of his hopes, relapsed into his former disorder, which, by alarming the emperor, procured his release.

On the morning after a violent paroxysm of his fever, the king was not a little surprized at seeing Lannoy enter his apartment, and approach his bed-side, in boots and a travelling dress, to perform the ceremony of his espousals to Eleanor, the emperor's sister, which was immediately done by proxy, though the princess herself was at that time in Spain, only four leagues from Madrid.

Charles

bank of the river Bidassoa, near Fontarabia; while Lautrec brought to the opposite side the two young sons of France, the Dauphin Francis, and his brother Henry, duke of Orleans, who were to be delivered up as hostages for the due execution of the treaty. The exchange was immediately made, and Francis once more entered his kingdom *. At Bayonne he found his mother Louisa and his sister Margaret, who waited for his

Charles then visited the king, and the two monarchs went in the emperor's coach to wait on the princess Eleanor. Every mark of mutual confidence, and even affection, succeeded to the severity with which Francis had been so long treated. The Marechal de Montmorenci was dispatched into France, to the regent Louisa, to announce to her the conclusion of the treaty, and to name Bayonne as the place where her son expected her immediate presence.

* Every circumstance of the exchange of Francis the first and his two sons, is of a nature so calculated to excite the curiosity, and to awaken the attention, of the human mind, that no detail of it can appear too minute and too diffuse. No precaution of jealous policy was omitted in the transaction of this affair. On the day appointed by both crowns, a large boat was fixed at anchor in the midst of the river Bidassoa. Francis, accompanied by Lannoy, and escorted by Alarçon and fifty horse, appeared on the western bank, while Lautrec, conducting the princes of France, arrived on the opposite side, with the same number of attendants. Each party, at the same moment, accompanied only by eight men compleatly armed, embarked in two small boats, and reached the bark moored in the center of the stream. The exchange was made without any delay, Francis passing into the boat
of

1526. his arrival. The interview between them was affecting and tender in the highest degree. The Countess d'Angoulesme, who knew the constitution of her son, and his disposition to gallantry, had prepared for him fetters of a foster nature than those which he had lately experienced at Madrid. She presented to him the celebrated Mademoiselle de Heilly, better known in history under the title of the Duchesse d'Estampes. Her age at this time did not exceed eighteen years; the beauty of her person, which was the most delicate and perfect, her winning address, and her understanding, improved by all the cultivation of the times, ensured her conquest over the king. He became passionately attached to her, and their

of Lautrec, and the two young princes into that of Lannoy, which conducted them to the respective banks.—It is matter of great astonishment, that no contemporary historian should have commemorated or mentioned the effect which the sight of his two children, whom he fondly loved, must have produced in the bosom of the king their father, peculiarly under the circumstances of their being delivered up as hostages to the emperor to procure his own release. No sooner had Francis reached his dominions, than he mounted a Turkish horse, which waited for him, and galloped, without stopping or even looking behind him, to the town of St. Jean de Luz, often waving his bonnet in the air, and repeating, “Je suis encore Roi!”—Having taken some slight refreshment at St. Jean de Luz, he continued his route to Bayonne the same day, where his mother and all the court impatiently expected his arrival.

connection

connection lasted in its full force during the remainder of his life *.

1526.

The re-entry of Francis into his dominions forms a new epocha in his reign.

* Anne de Pisseleu, afterwards created duchess d'Estampes, was daughter to William Pisseleu, Seigneur de Heilly. She was born about the year 1508, and received the most finished education which the age admitted. She entered into the service of Louisa of Savoy, Francis's mother, during the king's imprisonment in Spain, and accompanied the regent to Bayonne, where Francis first saw, and became enamoured of her. The immediate consequence of his attachment to this new mistress, was his quitting the countess of Chateau-Briant, to whom, previous to his capture, he had been long enslaved.—The king, in the following year, 1527, married Mademoiselle de Heilly to John de Brosse, whose father René had been an accomplice in the revolt and flight of the Constable of Bourbon, and was killed at the battle of Pavia.—The confiscated estates of the family, were all restored to John de Brosse, and the king, besides creating him duke d'Estampes, conferred on him the order of St. Michael, and made him governor of Bretagne.—His marriage was merely a ceremony, and did not prevent the duchess d'Estampes from openly occupying the first place in the affections and favour of the king during his whole reign. She was suspected of secretly protecting and adhering to the doctrines of Luther, and in this suspicion, Francis's sister, Margaret queen of Navarre, was equally included. The rivalry, and mutual animosity, between the duchess d'Estampes and Diana de Poitiers, mistress to the Dauphin Henry, embittered and disgraced the last years of the reign of Francis the first.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER THE SEVENTH.

Violation of the Treaty of Madrid.—Renewal of the war between Francis and the Emperor.—Sack of Rome.—Death of Charles of Bourbon.—Unsuccessful expedition against Naples.—Death of Lautrec.—Peace of Cambray.—Release of the Dauphin and Duke of Orleans.—Magnificence of the King.—Death of his mother, Louisa.—Interview of Marseilles.—Marriage of Henry duke of Orleans to Catherine of Medicis.—War renewed.—The Emperor invades Provence.—Death of Francis, the Dauphin.—Circumstances of it.—His character.—Reflections.—Retreat of the Emperor into Italy.—Marriage of James the fifth, King of Scotland, to the princess Magdalen.—Character of the Constable de Montmorenci.—Interviews of Nice, and of Aigues-Mortes.—Francis's amours, illness, and consequent change of character.—Passage of the Emperor through France.—Alteration in the ministry.—Third war.—Description of the Court of Francis.—Battle of Cerizoles.—Invasion of Picardy by the Emperor.—Intrigues of the duchess d'Estampes.—Conclusion of Peace.—Death of Charles, Duke of Orleans.—Circumstances attending it.—His character.—Death of the Count d'Enguien.—Parties formed

in the court.—Illness of Francis.—Circumstances of it.—His last admonitions to the Dauphin.—His death.—Character.

FRANCIS the first was still in the prime of life when his imprisonment ended, and he saw himself again restored to his throne and people. His misfortunes, and consequent captivity, though they had not made so deep an impression on him as to alter essentially his character, yet rendered him more circumspect and cautious in his conduct. The rash and impetuous valour which had distinguished him hitherto, was calmed, and attemper'd into a milder courage; and policy, or interests of state, compelled him to adopt measures better adapted to the temper of the emperor, his antagonist.—But these were only partial changes: his magnificence always accompanied with profusion; his unrestrained attachment and liberality to favourites; his passion for women, and all the luxurious dissipations of a court; these errors yet characterised him in their utmost extent, and, by introducing confusion into his finances, and disorder through every department of government, gave Charles a superiority in the affairs of war, and involved France in numberless misfortunes.

So oppressive and severe were the conditions of the treaty of Madrid, that the king, conscious his infringement of them would be approved and defended

1526. defended throughout all Europe, no sooner recovered his freedom, than he declared to Lannoy, who had accompanied him to demand their execution, that Burgundy, being a part, not of the royal domain, but of the kingdom itself, could not be alienated or dismembered by any exertion of the regal authority; and that he held himself not bound by his oaths, as they were compulsory, and the effect of necessity. Having proceeded to make other offers for the release of his children, and for the settlement of a final peace, he instantly prepared himself to exert new military efforts to compel the emperor to the acceptance of these proposals. In this design, a great league was concluded at the castle of Cognac in Angoumois, to which place he had retired during the summer, to enjoy the pleasures of the chace. The powers confederated were, Francis, the Pope, Sforza, the Venetians, and Florence*.

May.

Had

* The king had no sooner reached Bayonne, than he refused to ratify the treaty of Madrid. His first attention was to conciliate the friendship of Henry the eighth, to whom he immediately addressed a letter, full of the warmest testimonies of affection. The viceroy of Naples, who had remained at Vittoria in Biscay with the new queen Eleanor of Portugal, and the princes of France, having received the emperor's orders, waited on Francis at Cognac, accompanied by Moncade and Don Fernand d'Alarçon, to summon him to fulfil his engagements. The king received these noblemen with every possible mark of distinction, but persisted in his refusal

Had their combined forces attacked the Milanese without delay, destitute as it was either of troops or commanders, it must have been inevitably re-conquered; but a negligence and inattention to these manifest advantages, equally extraordinary and blameable, gave Bourbon time to arrive in Italy, and Lannoy to provide for the safety of Naples. The former of these generals, (to whom Charles had promised the investiture of the duchy,) after having compelled Francis Sforza to surrender the castle of Milan, and having exhausted every art to satisfy the murmurs of his discontented soldiery, took the daring and desperate resolution of marching to Rome *. He executed

1526.

1527.

sal to ratify the conditions; and the deputies of the states of Burgundy confirmed this determination in presence of the ambassadors, by declaring the province incapable of being alienated from the kingdom of France. Charles, on receiving this intelligence, immediately transferred the Dauphin and the duke of Orleans to Valladolid, reproached the king with the violation of his oath, and summoned him to return into captivity; but ordered his ministers to remain in France, and try the effect of negotiation. The league of Cognac was signed on the 22d of May, 1526, and the Pope was declared head of it. To the powers originally confederated were added the Swiss, and the king of England, which latter prince was decorated with the title of its protector.

* Though Sforza held out the castle of Milan for a considerable time against Pescara, and after the death of that general continued to defend himself against Antonio de Leyva and the marquis del Guasto, the two imperial commanders; yet

1527. executed it; and, though he was killed at the attack by a musket-shot under the walls, his victorious army, the command of which devolved on Philibert, prince of Orange, entered; and pillaged

yet the city of Milan had long been abandoned to the licentious fury of an enraged soldiery. They committed with impunity every sacrilegious and flagitious enormity of which human nature is capable; while the wretched inhabitants of that once flourishing capital were alternately the victims of insatiable rapacity, lust, and cruelty. Such was the deplorable condition of Milan, when Bourbon arrived, and assumed the command of the imperial forces. Touched with the supplications and distress of the magistrates and citizens, he solemnly swore to withdraw the soldiery, and to encamp them without the walls, provided he was immediately supplied with the sum of thirty thousand ducats, which was indispensably requisite to enable him to satisfy the demands of his army; but no sooner had the inhabitants complied with this requisition, than Bourbon, probably more from inability, than any intentional violation of his engagements, eluded and evaded the execution of them. Milan continued to groan under the most unrestrain'd tyranny, till Sforza, having surrendered the castle, and the city no longer affording plunder for the troops, it became requisite for Bourbon to propose some desperate enterprize, by the prospect of which he might induce them to quit that exhausted and depopulated capital. He presented to their rapacity and avarice the view of Rome. Passing the Po, and afterwards the Oglio at Borgo-forte, in defiance of the confederate army, he marched to Pavia; from whence he continued his route towards Tuscany, Florence and Rome equally dreading where the blow would fall, while his own army, uncertain whither their commander led them, followed his orders in submission and expectation.

Never

laged that celebrated city. Clement the seventh, who had retired to the castle of St. Angelo, was forced to capitulate, and remained a prisoner in the hands of the emperor *. Rome itself, abandoned

1527.

Never were more sublime talents betrayed in war, or greater resources exerted, than by Charles of Bourbon, in the conduct of his army. He had inspired the soldiery with the most enthusiastic attachment to his person, and deference to his commands. He marched by their side, mingled in their songs, and partook equally of their festivities, or their distresses. Their reverence for his character approached to idolatry; and it was to him, not to the emperor (from whom they received neither pay nor directions), that they alone felt obedience. Bourbon distributed among them his jewels, his equipage, his plate, even his wardrobe, reserving only a coat of silver tissue, which he wore over his armour. "My children," said he frequently to them, "I am, like you, only a poor gentleman: I possess nothing; let us make our fortune together!" The troops answered by cries of transport and affection. So little was the army under subjection to any other commands than those of Bourbon, that the troops refused to yield obedience to the directions of the viceroy of Naples, Lannoy, who represented the person of the emperor, and who had actually concluded a suspension of hostilities with pope Clement. His person was not even in safety in the imperial camp; and the marquis del Guasto having submitted singly to his orders, the soldiers instantly declared him by that act, a rebel to the emperor. Bourbon passing the Appennines, entered Tuscany, and quitted Arezzo on the 26th of April, without baggage or artillery, taking the road to Rome, and follow'd at a distance by the confederate army, under the command of the duke of Urbino.

* No sooner was Bourbon in sight of the imperial city of Rome, than he harangued his forces, and pointed to the end

1527. doned to the rapacity and violence of the conquerors,

of all their calamities. Being destitute of artillery by which he might batter the walls, he instantly made his dispositions for an assault; and having discovered a breach, he planted with his own hands a ladder against the rampart, and prepared to mount it, followed by his German bands; but at that instant a shot discharged from the first arquebuse which was fired, terminated his life, and his misfortunes, together. Much fruitless enquiry has been made to discover the author of his death; which is commonly attributed to a priest; but Benvenuto Cellini, so well known by his extraordinary writings and adventures, lays claim to the merit of having killed this hero. Cellini's recital of the circumstances accompanying it, though picturesque, and even natural, has, however, only a very problematical claim to our belief; especially as he likewise asserts the same fact respecting the prince of Orange, who succeeded Bourbon in the command, and whom he equally pretends to have killed. By whatever hand this illustrious person fell, he preserved, even in the act of expiring, all his magnanimity and grandeur of mind. It is indisputable, from the judicial attestations of du Bellay-Langey, and of other authors, that Bourbon no sooner felt himself mortally wounded, than he ordered a Gascon captain named Jonas, to cover him with a cloak, and to conceal his death, lest it should damp the courage of his soldiers. Jonas executed his commands with punctuality. Le Ferron says, that the Constable still breathed when the city was taken; that he was carried into Rome, and there expired. It is certain that he died at two o'clock in the morning of Monday the 5th of May, 1527, at thirty-eight years of age. Philibert, prince of Orange, contrived to keep the troops in ignorance of their beloved commander's death, 'till they were masters of Rome; and then, to render them inaccessible to pity, he revealed to them the fate of Bourbon.

No

querors, became a theatre of carnage and universal desolation*.

1527.

So

No language can express the fury with which they were animated at this sad intelligence. They rent the air with the cries of "Carné, carné! sangré, sangré! Bourbon, Bourbon!"

* The imagination is appall'd at the bare recital of the wanton outrages on human nature, which were committed by Bourbon's army, during the time that they remained masters of Rome. The pillage lasted without any interruption for two months. Never had that proud, but unfortunate city suffered from her barbarian conquerors, from Alaric, from Genseric, or from Odoacer, the same merciless treatment, as she underwent from the rage of the imperial troops. Rapacity, lust, and impiety, were exhausted by these unrelenting spoilers. The Roman ladies of the noblest extraction were submitted to the basest and vilest prostitutions. The sacred ornaments of the sacerdotal, and even of the pontifical dignity, were converted to purposes of ridicule and buffoonery. Priests, nay, even bishops and cardinals, were degraded to the brutal passions of the soldiery; and after having suffered every ignominy of blows, mutilation, and personal contumely, were massacred in pastime.

Exorbitant ransoms were exacted, repeatedly, from the same persons; and when they had no longer wherewithal to purchase life, they were butchered without mercy. Nuns, virgins, matrons, were publicly devoted to the infamous appetites of the soldiers, who first violated, and then stabbed the victims of their pleasures. The streets were strewed with the dead.

Such was the dreadful spectacle which Rome exhibited at this awful æra! The Roman blood, so often debased and contaminated by the barbarians of the lower empire, by the Huns, the Vandals, and the Goths, suffered the last pol-

1527.

So violent, and as it was then deemed, so sacrilegious an outrage on the common father of Christendom, produced a new league between Henry the eighth and Francis, which was cemented by mutual jealousy and terror. Lautrec, who had long lain under the displeasure of his sovereign, was recalled, and placed at the head of the army

lution by the intermixture of the Spanish and German nations. Eight thousand young women, of all ranks and conditions, were found to be pregnant within five months from the sack of that unhappy city. Even the palaces, and the persons of those cardinals, most attached to the party of the emperor, were involved in the common calamity. The cardinal of Sienna, who from his avowed predilection for the imperial faction, had not thought it requisite to quit his palace, and fly for protection to the castle of St. Angelo, was compelled to pay a prodigious ransom first to the Spaniards, and afterwards to the Germans. Not content with this act of injustice and rapacity, they placed him, bare-headed, on an ass, and in this condition conducted him through the streets of Rome, stunned with blows. The cardinals of Minerva, and of Ponzetta, underwent the same inhuman treatment, though the latter prelate was eighty years of age. The cardinals of Armelyn, and of Santiquatro, flying from the rage of the soldiery, were drawn up by ropes into the castle of St. Angelo. Lannoy attempted in vain, by his presence and authority, to impose some restraint on these flagitious excesses and enormities. Scarcely was his own person safe in Rome. Philibert, Prince of Orange, alone retained some command over his licentious forces, amid this general scene of devastation. Beaucaire, du Bellai-Langey, and Guicciardini, all concur in their enumeration and description of these unprecedented atrocities.

destined

destined against Italy. Grown distrustful by his past misfortunes, and foreseeing, in the character of the king, fresh sources of future disaster and defeat, he would willingly have declined the honour tendered him; but being obliged to submit to the royal mandate, he prepared to pass the mountains.

1527.

The two kings sent their heralds to defy the emperor; who returned these insults by reproaches and invectives against Francis, whom he branded with epithets the most opprobrious, and challenged to single combat. In the impotence of his resentment, Charles even violated the sacred duties of humanity and clemency, by revenging the errors of the father on his guiltless children. He not only rendered the confinement of the young Dauphin and the duke of Orleans unusually strict; but he shut them up in apartments which were darkened, and did not permit them to partake of any sort of diversion or amusement. His visits to them were short, cold, and unfrequent; and, by an act of barbarity unworthy of his character, he deprived them of the attendance of their most faithful domestics, whom he sent to work, chained, in his galleys.

Meanwhile Lautrec again entered the Milanese, so often conquered, and so often lost. With the fortune constantly attendant on the French arms at their first arrival, he soon reduced the duchy to subjection. At the news of his ap-

1527. proach, Philibert, prince of Orange, together with the other imperial generals, released the sovereign pontiff, and hastily evacuated Rome*.
- Decem-
ber.
1528. Lautrec pursued them by forced marches; and offering battle to their troops, who were enervated by plunder, and diminished by pestilential diseases, the natural effects of their intemperance and licentiousness, he drove them before him in confusion. Naples afforded them an asylum. It is said, that had he improved his present advantage, and immediately besieged that city, he might have hoped for every success from their general disorder and dismay; but he lost this favourable

* Lannoy died about this time at Gaieta, having before his decease named Moncade his successor during pleasure in the viceroyalty of Naples. Moncade, who is accused by the cotemporary historians as equally destitute either of humanity, or even of a belief in Christianity, was inclined to have rendered the pope's imprisonment perpetual. But Clement, availing himself of every avenue to the human heart, contrived by flattery, by ecclesiastical dignities, by promises, and even, at last, by the sale of the purple, to gain his most inveterate enemies. The 9th of December 1527 was fixed for his release; but on the preceding night he quitted the castle of St. Angelo, disguised, according to Guicciardini, as a merchant, or, as Beaucaire asserts, in the dress of a servant. A company of soldiers, who waited for him in the adjoining meadow, escorted him to Montefiascone; from whence he immediately continued his flight to Orvieto, where he arrived in the night, almost alone, and unattended even by a single cardinal.

junction

junction in the attack of several inferior places, and at length, when too late, sat down before the capital. 1528.

By that fatality which seemed to accompany every enterprize of Francis beyond the Alps, but which was really the necessary consequence of his own remissness and desultory measures, all these promising appearances were soon overcast, and produced no lasting good effect. Lautrec, anxious for his own and his sovereign's glory, and animated with the warmest enthusiasm in the cause of his country, exerted all his endeavours to avert the destruction which he had early predicted.— He implored the king to satisfy and conciliate the celebrated Andrea Doria, whose concurrence and aid to block up the port of Naples, was indispensably necessary to the capture of that city. It was debated in the cabinet council whether this advice should be comply'd with; but the chancellor Du Prat and Montmorenci having strongly opposed it from some little motives of private interest, that salutary counsel was rejected*. The siege of Naples was

* Andrea Doria, so celebrated in the annals of freedom, and so renowned in the history of Italy, was sprung from one of the most illustrious houses of Genoa. He was the greatest naval commander of his age; and having originally subjected Genoa to Francis, he anxiously aspired to the glory of liberating his native city, and restoring the republican government, under which it had flourished for several centuries. The Genoese offered the king of France two hundred thousand ducats, as the price of their emancipation. Francis not

1528. was unavoidably protracted; summer advanced, and distempers began to spread themselves among the French; while the hopes of success grew every day fainter, and the army, almost rendered incapable of action by its continual losses, sunk into universal dejection. Lautrec long sustained his own courage unshaken; but being seized at length with a mortal disease, he became unable to perform the functions of a general. His officers endeavoured to induce him to retire to Capua, which might still have been effected; but he had sworn to enter Naples victorious, or to die in the attempt, and, sinking under the distress and agitation of his mind, still more than under bodily infirmity, he expired in the camp*. With him, the small remains of vigour and firmness, which

only refused this request, but conceiving it necessary to humble and to weaken Genoa, he took very decided measures for raising and aggrandizing Savona; a neighbouring city, which he detached from the dominions of Genoa, and where he began to construct a port and fortifications. This act of imprudent resentment alienated the affections of Doria and his countrymen, who at length threw themselves into the arms of the emperor. Charles knew the value of that friendship, which Francis had neglected to preserve: Doria obtained the command of the Genoese galleys in the imperial service, with immense appointments; Savona was restored to Genoa; and the latter city was declared absolutely free, under the emperor's protection. Such were the ruinous and fatal consequences of Francis's misconduct!

* Never perhaps did the character of Lautrec appear in so elevated a point of view, as towards the close of his life. Though depressed

which yet animated his troops, became extinct. 1528.
The Marquis de Saluzzo, on whom the chief
command

depressed by disease, and hopeless of any succours from the court of France, he performed before Naples every duty of the most consummate commander. His vigilance, activity, and military resources protracted, though they could not avert, the unhappy destiny which pursued his army. Perhaps, if he would have submitted to raise the siege, and retire from before Naples, he might have effected his retreat; but his high sense of honour, and unconquered mind, did not allow him to embrace so wholesome, but humiliating an alternative. He resisted the progress of the disorder, which consumed himself and his forces, with an undaunted spirit; nor did the enemy obtain any important advantage over the troops of France, while Lautrec survived. Compelled at length by weakness to keep his bed, he still continued his anxious, and incessant enquiries, after the condition of his army. The officers concealed from him the fatal havock made by the plague, as much as possible; but he, distrusting the veracity of their assertions, and resolved to ascertain the truth, ordered two pages into his presence, who had not been previously instructed what answer to return to his enquiries. He menaced them with the most severe and ignominious punishment, if they did not instantly satisfy him as to the real state of his forces. They, terrified at his threats, and intimidated by his denunciations of vengeance, threw themselves on their knees, and made an ingenuous disclosure of the melancholy condition of the camp, which was a scene of universal death and despair. Lautrec turned himself in his bed, heaved one groan, and immediately expired!—His remains, which were at first buried in the camp, by his weeping soldiers with their own hands, were afterwards transported to Naples by a Spanish soldier, who intended to sell the body to the

1528. command devolved, having been wounded in the knee, capitulated soon after at Averfa, and died in imprisonment. All the kingdom of Naples was evacuated by the French; and these vast preparations, like so many others which had preceded them, produced no advantage to France.

1529. Tired with war, and exhausted by such continual efforts, the several princes of Europe suspended, from common weakness, their mutual hostilities; and this voluntary truce was followed by a final pacification. Margaret of Burgundy, aunt to the emperor, and Louisa, mother of Francis, were the persons who mediated so desirable an

August. accommodation*. It was concluded at Cambray; and the terms, though injurious, and even ignominious

the relations of Lautrec; but Gonsalvo de Cordova, grandson to the celebrated general of that name, with a liberality and greatness of mind the most exalted, paid him the honours of a funeral, and erected to his memory a marble monument in the church of "St. Maria la Nuova," at Naples, on which he inscribed an epitaph commemorating the virtues and misfortunes of Lautrec. His unhappy end must incline posterity to draw a veil over the defects of his character, and to forget his presumption, imprudence, and arrogance.

* Margaret, daughter of the Archduke Maximilian and Mary of Burgundy, was a princess of infinite wit and capacity. Her marriage with Charles the eighth of France having been dissolved from political motives, she was sent back into the Low Countries. She was afterwards demanded by Ferdinand of Aragon and Isabella, for their only son Don Juan, heir to the Spanish monarchy. On her voyage from Flanders into Spain, she was attacked by a violent storm near the coast of England, during

minious to France, were yet accepted, solely with a view to rescue the Dauphin and his brother the duke of Orleans from their captivity; a stipulation which formed one of the most important articles of the treaty. Francis renounced his pretensions to the kingdom of Naples, and to the duchy of Milan, as well as all his rights of sovereignty over Flanders and Artois. His allies were sacrificed and abandoned; but Milan was restored to Sforza, and Burgundy preserved to France. Florence, after a long and obstinate defence, surrendered to the imperial forces, and the house of Medicis were re-established in all their ancient authority over that city and its territory *.

The

during which the vessel was expected to sink. In such a scene of terror and confusion, it is said that she yet had the calmness and presence of mind to tie all her jewels round her arm in a waxed cloth; annexing to them these two humorous lines of poetry, descriptive of her peculiar fortune,

“ Cy git Margot, la gente Demoiselle,

“ Qu’eut deux Maris, et si mourut Pucelle.”

* The siege of Florence may be compared with that of Rochelle by Richlieu in the last century, and with any of the most celebrated sieges of antiquity. Every horror of famine was experienced by the wretched citizens, previous to their surrender. Political and religious fanaticism, while they heightened the calamities of that unfortunate city, enabled its inhabitants to support them. They capitulated on the 9th of August, 1530. Philibert, prince of Orange, one of the most renowned commanders of that age, so fertile in illustrious persons, was killed only a short time before the surrender of

1529.

The Marechal de Montmorenci was sent to Andaye, on the frontier of Spain, with the ransom, amounting to two millions of crowns of gold; while Velasco, Constable of Castile, conducted the two young princes, and Eleanor, the sister of Charles, to the opposite side of the river

1st June. Bidassoa, where the exchange being reciprocally made, they proceeded towards Bourdeaux *.

of Florence, in the attack of a convoy between Pisa and Pistoia. He commanded the imperial troops, and died, like Pescara and Bourbon, his predecessors, in the prime of life, leaving behind him an immortal reputation. He was only thirty years old at the time when he was killed, and resembled the Constable of Bourbon in the most beautiful and shining features of his character, peculiarly in his affability and generosity. The soldiery carried their attachment to him even to idolatry; and Ferruccio, who commanded the Florentine convoy, in the attack of which the prince of Orange fell, being taken prisoner by the imperialists, was instantly put to death as an offering to the manes of their deceased and lamented general.

* The archbishop of Embrun, who was afterwards the celebrated cardinal de Tournon, accompanied Montmorenci in the execution of this important commission. Four months were employed by the Spanish and French directors of the finances, in the inspection of the money destined for the ransom, which was deposited in forty-eight chests, carefully sealed up. On the day appointed for the interchange, every precaution of the most jealous apprehension was observed by both parties. Velasco and Montmorenci met in the midst of the Bidassoa, where a vessel was moored, and in which the princes and the treasure were at the same instant reciprocally exchanged. Montpensat was immediately dispatch'd to carry the news to Francis at Bourdeaux, from whence he set forward to meet his new queen and children, without delay.

Francis

Francis advanced to meet them as far as the abbey of Veien in Gascony, and the nuptial ceremony was performed there the same day. Eleanor was at this time about thirty years of age : her person had very few charms ; and the king, who was already much attach'd to his mistress, the Duchess d'Estampes, never regarded her with affection, and considered the union between them as merely political. She received, notwithstanding, all the external honours of royalty, and was ever treated by him with great respect. As Montmorenci began likewise about this time to acquire a prodigious interest with, and ascendant over his master, the queen, conscious of her want of personal consequence, attached him to her service, and supported herself principally by his influence and credit*.

During

* Eleanor of Austria was born at Louvain in the Netherlands, in the month of November, 1498. She was married to the celebrated Emanuel, king of Portugal in 1519, and was left a widow by his death in 1521, having had only one daughter by that prince. She possess'd no eminent endowments of mind, or of person : Francis only regarded her as the sister of his rival and enemy ; nor did he treat her either with private affection, or political confidence. It does not, however, appear that she deserved this estrangement, or that she ever betrayed her husband to the emperor, as the Duchess d'Estampes unquestionably did, towards the close of Francis's reign. Eleanor survived the king ; and after his death, in 1547, she retired first into the Austrian Netherlands,

1530.

During the interval of tranquillity which succeeded to the almost continual wars since Francis's accession, he mixed the patronage of letters, and the munificent protection of all the liberal arts, with the splendour and luxury which eminently distinguished his court. The simplicity of manners under Louis the twelfth was forgotten; and the introduction of ladies constantly about the person of the sovereign, a custom unknown before in Europe, diffused a spirit of gallantry, which the king's character and conversation were highly calculated to encourage. "Une cour fans dames," said he frequently, "est une année fans printemps; une printemps fans roses." His sister Margaret, queen of Navarre, was one of the most accomplished princesses of whom we read in history. Though the martial spirit of chivalry still gave an air of rudeness and ferocity to the diversions and entertainments of the age, yet an elegance and refinement insensibly mixed itself with them, and began to polish the roughness of this remaining barbarism. The palaces of Fontainebleau, Cham-

Netherlands, and afterwards into Spain, where she died at Talavera on the 18th of February, 1558. History is very silent respecting her; and it is somewhat remarkable, that in the funeral oration pronounced by the bishop of Macon for Francis the first, in which many particulars relative to the King's last moments and words are enumerated, no mention whatever is made of Eleanor.

bord,

bord, and St. Germain-en-Laye successively appeared; and genius, rais'd by the encouragement extended to it by so great a monarch, exerted its first attempts in eulogiums to his honour.

1531.

The death of the Duchess of Angoulême, the king's mother, soon followed the peace, which had been chiefly produced by her endeavours. Paris being desolated by the plague, she retired to Fontainebleau; but the infection having extended to the environs of that place, obliged her to take the rout of Romorantin in Berri. She was seiz'd with a distemper on the road, and forced to stop at Grez, a little village in the Gatinois, where she died after a few days illness, at fifty-four years of age*.

22d September.

Though

* Louisa of Savoy left a prodigious sum of money in her coffers at her decease, amounting, as appears by a letter of the Marechal de Montmorenci to the bishop of Auxerre, to above fourteen hundred thousand crowns. Rapacity and avarice were among the most marked of her vices; and Francis was too subservient to all her passions, to impose any effectual controul upon their course. Brantome relates a circumstance of her death, which strongly evinces the force of those superstitious terrors, to which even princes were not superior, in the sixteenth century. Three days before she died, says he, being awake during the night, she was surprized at an extraordinary brightness, which illuminated the chamber. Apprehending it to be the fire which her women had made, she reprimanded them; but they replied, that it was caused by the moon. The duchess ordered her curtains to be undrawn; and discovered that this unusual light was produced by a comet. "Ah!" exclaimed she,

"this

1531. Though her masterly and unwearied efforts to procure the king's release from captivity after the battle of Pavia, seem in some measure to efface the criminal conduct which preceded it; yet cannot it obliterate the stain of Bourbon's exile, and of Semblançai's execution. She was more lamented by her son, than by his people, and seems to have been quickly forgotten by both. Francis solemniz'd her funerals with his accustomed magnificence. She was buried at St. Denis, among the sovereigns of France; and flatterers, who are ever ready to celebrate even the imaginary virtues of the great, crowned her tomb with laurels and panegyrics.

1532. The alliance between France and England still subsisted. The two kings, mutually desirous of

" this is a phenomenon that appears not for persons of common condition ! Shut the window ; it is a comet, which announces my departure ; I must prepare myself for it."— On the ensuing morning she sent for her confessor, being convinced of her approaching dissolution. The physicians assured her that her apprehensions were ill-founded and premature. " If I had not seen," replied Louisa, " the signal for my death, I could believe you ; for I do not feel myself exhausted." She expired on the third day after this event.

It is said that she had always extremely dreaded death, and could never bear the mention of mortality, even from the pulpit. Long after this period, and even late in the last century, all the appearances of the celestial bodies, not perfectly comprehended by the multitude, were supposed to indicate the deaths of sovereigns, or the changes and revolutions of empires.

cementing

cementing it, met at St. Joquevert, a little village between Calais and Boulogne. Every mark of reciprocal confidence, honour, and friendship, was shewn by each in turn, and all the appearances of a perfect union were displayed in their behaviour. We find no period of modern history, when the interviews of monarchs were so frequent as in the sixteenth century, and they were more peculiarly so under this reign; yet no compacts were ever so soon violated, nor ever were wars so obstinate, and so continually renewed.

1532.
October.

This conference was followed, in the ensuing year, by another of more consequence, and greater splendour—the famous interview of Marseilles. Francis, occupied with the idea of reconquering the Milanese; adapted all his measures to that great purpose. He courted the Italian princes, and especially the house of Medicis, as capable of being made eminently subservient to his views on the duchy. These motives at length determined him to enter into the closest connections with Clement the seventh, the reigning pontiff, by demanding Catherine of Medicis the pope's niece, in marriage for his second son, Henry, duke of Orleans. Clement, flattered by this condescension in so great a monarch, and still more anxious to aggrandise his family, by the alliance with the blood royal of France, accepted the offer with a pleasure which he did not affect to conceal. The king's gallies conducted the pope and the princess into France. Francis, attended by the

1533.
October.

T

queen

1533.

28th October.

queen and his whole court, made his public entry into Marseilles on the day following that of his Holiness. The nuptials were celebrated with uncommon magnificence, and the festivities continued during five weeks *. Henry and Catherine were both in very early youth, their ages only differing by thirteen days, nor had either of them yet completed their fourteenth year; but Clement, fearing that from the change of political circumstances, the marriage, if not completed, might be liable to a dissolution, demanded its instant consummation, which was performed the same night. The king founded great expectations on this alliance, in case of future hostilities with the emperor; but they were all dissipated by the untimely death of the pope, which happened only eleven months afterwards †.

New

* The interview of Marseilles began on the 4th of October, and terminated on the 20th of November, 1533. Clement and Francis were lodged in two houses opposite each other, joined by a wooden gallery of communication, for the purpose of private conferences. The young princess, Catherine of Medicis, afterwards so renowned in the history of France, was conducted from Pisa to Marseilles by the duke of Albany her uncle, in the French gallies. The nuptial ceremony and benediction were performed by Clement himself, who was anxious to complete with his own hands, a work which laid the foundation of the future greatness of the house of Medicis.

† Clement the seventh was a prince of genius and policy, possessing talents for government, as well as many of the vir-

tues

New causes of discontent between these powerful and inveterate rivals increased continually, and portended the renewal of those convulsions which had already interested and disturbed all Europe. Francis first openly appeared in arms. The execution of Merveille, his agent at Milan, whom Francisco Sforza, with an intention of gratifying Charles the fifth, had caused to be privately put to death in prison, formed a pretext for the rupture *; and as the duke of Savoy had likewise given

tues which adorn private life; but timidity was the predominant feature of his character, and conduced to produce or to augment all the misfortunes of his reign. Never was any papacy more eminently marked with calamities. He expired of a lingering distemper, after having foretold his approaching dissolution, ordered the ring and the funeral habit in which the sovereign pontiffs are interred, and recommended Alexander Farnese, dean of the sacred college, as his successor in the chair of St. Peter. That cardinal was elected unanimously by the conclave, and assumed the name of Paul the third. Clement the seventh died on the 24th September, 1534.

* There is not any event during the whole reign of Francis, more mysterious and inexplicable, than the execution of Merveille. He was a Milanese gentleman, who having acquired a considerable fortune in France, under the reign of Louis the twelfth and his successor, principally by the liberality of those two princes, was, at Sforza's personal and unprovoked solicitation, appointed minister from the king at the court of Milan. His credentials were, however, concealed, and his quality of ambassador from Francis not avowed, on account of Sforza's dread lest the emperor should resent such a public demonstration of his confidence in the king of France.

1534. given him many causes of umbrage and dissatisfaction, besides his having refus'd permission to the French troops to pass through Piedmont, the king no longer observed any measures with that prince.

1535. Brion, lately created admiral, entered his dominions, and reduc'd them almost without a blow, while the duke implored in vain the emperor's protection. Francisco Sforza, Duke of Milan, and last of his line, died at this time; and it is said that his terror at the approach of

Charles no sooner discovered the nature of Merveille's commission, than he menaced the duke of Milan with his severest indignation. A gentleman of the bedchamber to Sforza, named the Seigneur de Castiglione, having wantonly, and as it would seem, intentionally, insulted and wounded some of Merveille's attendants, was killed in the streets of Milan, on the 3d of July, 1533, by those domestics in their own defence. In consequence of this tumult, and by the permission of Sforza, if not by his directions, Merveille was instantly seized and imprisoned: all his servants were put to the torture, in hopes of extorting from them some confession against their master; and Merveille himself, notwithstanding the sacred nature of his character, and the protection which it ought to have afforded him, was privately beheaded during the night in prison, on the 6th of July, three days after the death of Castiglione. His body was publicly exposed in the great square of Milan. Sforza afterwards dispatched his chancellor Taverne, nephew of Merveille, to justify his conduct to Francis, and to deny that Merveille was invested with any public character; but Taverne was instantly driven from court by the king, with every mark of infamy and detestation. It appears clearly, that Sforza acted, throughout this whole transaction, under the terror of the emperor's resentment, to which he sacrificed every motive of public justice and private honour,

the

the French, from whom his family and himself had undergone so many calamities, encreased or caused the distemper of which he expired. 1535.

In the mean time Charles, returning victorious from his expedition against Tunis, and crowned with trophies gained over the Moors, prepared to revenge the injuries done to his ally, the duke of Savoy. After having given vent to his resentment against Francis, by a speech in the Conclave filled with accusations and complaints of the perfidy and ambition of that prince, he joined his general Antonio de Leyva, so renowned for his great military exploits, and opened the campaign. His late successes in Africa, the servile flatteries of his courtiers and parasites, joined to the predictions of astrologers and fortune-tellers, who were then in no small estimation even with the wisest princes, had so elated him, and so perverted an understanding naturally cool and discerning, that, in opposition to the opinion of his oldest and wisest captains, he determined to enter Provence. Every argument and motive urged to dissuade him from this resolution, were ineffectual. Blind to the most cogent reasons, and untaught by the experience of Bourbon's former ill success, he passed the river Var, and continued his march into France. 1536.
25th July.

The king's wisdom and care were never more ably exerted, than in this imminent necessity of the state. Distrustful of fortune, and render'd cautious

1536. by the remembrance of past disasters, he resolved to trust no event to the uncertain fate of battle; but to pursue a plan more circumspect and prudent. To ensure the safety of his kingdom, he sacrificed a single province; and prevented the imperial forces from procuring either forage or provisions, by laying waste, and totally destroying the country through which he knew they must pass. Francis himself encamped at Valence, and prepared to try the issue of a second battle, in case the defeat of Montmorenci, who was stationed at Avignon, nearer the frontier, should render it necessary for the general safety.

But while these public duties engrossed the attention of the King, a stroke of the most calamitous nature befel the Parent. The Dauphin, Francis, his eldest son, a prince of the highest expectations, and peculiarly dear to his father and to all France, died at nineteen years of age. The circumstances of his death, as they seemed to justify a suspicion of poison, encreased the general affliction. The prince had been playing at tennis, in the meadow of Ainay near Lyons; and having violently heated himself by the exercise, dispatched one of his pages to bring him some water. Donna Agnes Beatrix Pacheco, a Spanish lady of quality in the service of the queen, had presented the Dauphin with a curious cup, made of a species of earth, remarkable for the quality of communicating to any liquor poured into it

3

a peculiar

a peculiar coolness. While the page set down this cup on the side of the well, and was employed in pulling up the bucket, it was pretended that an Italian nobleman of Ferrara, named Sebastian Montecuculi, came up, and unperceived threw poison into the cup, out of which the Dauphin drank immediately afterwards. It is certain that he was instantly seiz'd with the most excruciating pains; and being very desirous to embrace his father before his death, and to breathe his last in his arms, he caused himself to be put into a boat on the Rhone, in hopes of reaching the city of Valence, alive; but even this small consolation was not reserved for his unhappy parent. The Dauphin died at Tournon, before he could reach the king. Francis's magnanimity and fortitude sunk under so cruel a stroke, and it was long before he recovered in any degree his accustom'd serenity. Henry, his second son, was not equally dear to him as was the prince he had lost. If we may credit the contemporary historians, the Dauphin Francis eminently possessed many of those qualities which conciliate love and admiration. In his person, he was handsome, and well proportion'd. His temper, serious, steady, and reserved, seemed to indicate an understanding more mature than his years; and his deportment at the interview of Marseilles, had impressed with respect

1536.

August.

1536. and wonder, that numerous and august assembly *.

7th Octo-
ber.

Montecuculi was arrested, and under the severity of the torture, confessed the crime ; he even accused Antonio de Leyva of being his accomplice, and threw out some dark insinuations against the emperor himself ; but these imputations ought not to admit of a moment's belief, and were probably extorted only by the violence of pain. Montecuculi was torn in pieces by wild horses, at Lyons. Henry, duke of Orleans, succeeded to the title of Dauphin, and

* The Dauphin, Francis, was certainly a prince of high expectation. He was born at Amboise in February, 1517, and resembled his father in many features of his person and character. Like him, the Dauphin had a decided passion for military glory ; and, like him, he had betrayed an attachment to the pleasures of love, to which it is said he had sacrificed beyond the limits of prudence. " La belle de l'Estranges," a beautiful Lady of the court, was the object of his passion ; and both Beaucaire and Le Ferron expressly assert, that the pleasures in which he had indulged himself with this favourite mistress, by inflaming his blood, probably hastened, if not caused the disorder of which he died. The Dauphin had been destined, by a treaty between Francis the first and Henry the eighth, to marry the princess Mary, daughter to the latter of those princes, and who afterwards ascended the throne of England. The weather was uncommonly hot during the summer in which he died ; and it seems more than probable, that he was carried off by a pleurisy, the natural consequence of drinking cold water after violent exercise.

left

left his own to Charles, the youngest of the king's sons *.

1536.

Charles pursuing his rout through Provence during this sad event, plundered the city of Aix, and sat down before Marfeilles; but at the end of a few weeks he found, when too late, the propriety and justice of those remonstrances which had been made to him previous to his undertaking this fatal expedition. Antonio de Leyva, worn out by repeated attacks of the gout, and exhausted with continual fatigue, was already

* Notwithstanding the general testimony of historians, there appears to be a great uncertainty spread over this whole transaction. Montecuculi accused the imperial generals: the French writers have not scrupled to name Catherine of Medicis as the author of the Dauphin's death, with the view of advancing her husband to the throne; but even this supposition ought not to be adopted without much stronger reasons. Can it be supposed, that at seventeen years of age, she could be capable of projecting and executing so atrocious a crime?—Montecuculi himself not only varied in his evidence, but he accused persons as privy to the commission of the act, whose innocence was incontestible and demonstrated. A treatise on poisons, written by Montecuculi's own hand, was undoubtedly found in his possession; nor can it be questioned that the king, who assisted in person with his whole court at Montecuculi's execution, believed him to be guilty of the Dauphin's death. Still, the punishment is by no means a proof of the crime imputed. The deaths of distinguished persons are often falsely attributed to poison, and the symptoms of the Dauphin's disease and death might have all been produced by drinking cold water, after an exercise which had exceedingly heated his blood.

dead

1536. dead of the same distemper which had carried off Lautrec before Naples. The imperial troops became the prey of a thousand diseases incident to camps; and no prospect appeared of the surrender of Marseilles. Yielding therefore to necessity, and compelled by these disasters, which every day encreased, the emperor began his march back into Savoy. All the roads were filled with his dying soldiers; and many of them, unable to support the fatigue of so painful a retreat, and incapable of following their commander, dropped under the weight of their arms, and fell into the hands of the enemy. Vast numbers were massacred by the exasperated peasants.—Montmorenci, cautious and circumspect, perhaps even to a fault, remained motionless in his camp near Avignon; and, instead of pursuing an army dismayed and broken by toils, he suffered them to escape, and to repass the mountains.

Charles, covered with confusion, remained only a short time in Italy. He embarked on board his gallies at Genoa; and arriving, after a dreadful tempest, in Spain, buried himself in the recesses of his palace*.

During

* The distresses of the imperial army in its retreat over the Alps into Italy, were equal to any, perhaps, ever sustained. The horses had no forage whatever, and subsisted entirely on the grass which they could hastily gather during their flight. The emperor himself was more than once without

During these transactions, James the fifth, 1536:
king of Scotland, mindful of the ancient alli-
ances between the two crowns, and excited by
the critical situation of France, hasten'd to the
assistance of Francis. He arrived too late for
any actual service, the emperor being already on
his retreat; but this proof of personal attachment
so deeply touched the king, that he could not re-
fuse the demand which James made of his daugh-
ter Magdalen in marriage. The princess was in
the bloom of youth, beautiful, and accomplished.
Her ambition, gratified by a throne, induced her
to accept with joy the proposal, though every en-
deavour was used to render her averse to the
union. The nuptials were celebrated at Pa-
ris, and the young queen accompanied her hus-
band into Scotland; but a hectic fever, with
which she was seized soon after her arrival there,
put an end to her life, within a few months after
the marriage *. James persisting in his desire of
being 1537.
1st Janu-
ary. 2d July.

without any sustenance or food during the whole day. On
his voyage into Spain, he narrowly escaped perishing; six
of his gallies foundered, and two large vessels, in one of
which was all his plate, and in the other his stud, shared the
same fate. It was commonly said, "that he was gone to
bury his honour in Spain, which was dead in France."

* The princess Magdalen was born in August, 1520.
Brantome plainly hints that her death was caused by sorrow
and regret, at having sacrificed her own delicious coun-
try to the ambition of reigning in a then rude and bar-
barous

1537. being connected with France, received from the king, Mary of Guise, widow of Louis, duke of Longueville, for his second wife.

The war was still continued with alternate and various success in Flanders and Piedmont; but the apparent interest which Francis took in the affairs of Scotland, and the two late successive marriages of James the fifth, inspired Henry the eighth with jealousy, and gradually detached him from the strict friendship which he had long professed for the king of France.

Montmorenci possessed at this time the most extensive and unbounded influence over his sovereign, and united in his own person almost all the great dignities of the kingdom. To the office of Constable, and grand master of the household, was superadded the absolute disposal of the finances. Neither his talents, nor the qualities of his heart seem to have been such, as rendered him worthy of these unparalleled and distinguished favours; and we are surprised to find a man who was uniformly unfortunate in the field, and frequently

barous kingdom. When convinced by sad experience of this truth, and conscious that her destiny permitted her to return no more to France, she sunk under it, frequently exclaiming, "*Helas! j'ai voulu etre Reine!*" Ronfard, the famous poet, has celebrated the nuptials, and very minutely described them, in a sort of epithalamium, not inelegant. He was at that time a page to the duke of Orleans, who presented him to the young queen at her departure, and he accompanied her into Scotland.

interested

interested or partial in the cabinet, the minister and favourite of two succeeding kings.—His ignorance was extreme, in an age and court where letters began to be peculiarly cultivated and honoured. The severity and brutality of his manners disgusted all who approached him; and his temper, stern, imperious, and unfeeling, rendered him even odious and dreaded. He cannot, however, justly be denied the praise due to courage, magnanimity, and loyalty. Francis, naturally discerning, and capable when not biassed by passion, of forming a just estimate of the human heart and mind, did not always continue to Montmorenci the same friendship and confidence. He disgraced him, and never would recall, or employ him afterwards; but neither his conduct nor advice could prevent his son, Henry the second, on his accession to the throne, from raising Montmorenci again to even greater honours, which continued without diminution till the death of that prince.

1537.

In order to induce Charles and Francis finally to accommodate their differences, Pope Paul the third, who had succeeded to the pontificate, prevailed on both monarchs to agree to an interview at Nice. They came; but for some reasons, either personal or political, never met, or saw each other*.

1538.

June.

* The two princes did not enter the city of Nice, which was the only remaining possession of the duke of Savoy.

Francis

1538. to perform the office of a mediator, could only procure a truce of ten years; but the emperor, at his departure, promised to meet the king at Aigues-Mortes in Languedoc. He came, at the instances of his sister Eleanor; and landing without guards, waited on his rival, and dined in his tent. The next day Francis returned this mark of confidence by a visit to Charles, and was entertained on board his galley. Every demonstration of mutual esteem and friendship was exchanged; they embraced, and appeared to have forgotten all their past animosities.—But the emperor, deeply skilled in the mazes of policy, and well acquainted with the generous character of the king, foresaw that he should have occasion to request a passage through his dominions; and only wore on this occasion the ap-

Francis was lodged at the little village of Villeneuve, only a quarter of a league from Nice, where he arrived some days before the emperor, who remained at Villefranche. It is difficult to ascertain or assign the reasons for their not seeing each other. The pope went from one to the other, hearing their mutual complaints, and vainly endeavouring to find some means of accommodation. Eleanor, Francis's queen, had however an ineffectual interview with her brother the emperor, at Villefranche. Though the pope could not procure a final pacification, yet to his interposition and exertions was due the truce for ten years, to which the two monarchs consented.

pearance

pearance of amity, that he might deceive him the more easily and effectually *.

1538.

On his return from this interview, Francis, who loved the study of nature, and possessed a curiosity of the most elegant and liberal kind, gratified himself by several researches which mark a turn of mind not usual in sovereign princes. He made a journey into Dauphiné, a province which affords many romantic and singular beauties of various kinds. He caused a boat to be built for the purpose of exploring a subterranean lake, situated near a village called Notre Dame de la Baulme, on the road from Grenoble to Lyons, and having ventured into it, he proceeded a considerable distance on the water; but a strong current, which grew more rapid as he advanced, attended with a noise which

* Du Bellai, in his Memoirs, does not seem to regard the interview of Aigues-Mortes as preconcerted. Francis, on his return from Nice to Avignon, received letters from the emperor, which informed him that Charles was disposed to land at Aigues-Mortes, and there to have that conference which had not taken place at Nice. Francis instantly set out to meet the emperor, and the two monarchs had several long conversations and interviews. The rebellion of the inhabitants of Ghent, though it did not break out into open revolt for some time afterwards, yet unquestionably was foreseen by a prince so sagacious and discerning as Charles the fifth; and it is probable, that he laid the foundation of the request which he soon after made to Francis for a passage through his dominions, during the interview of Aigues-Mortes.

seemed

1538. seemed to be occasioned by a whirlpool, obliged his guides to desist from any farther progress, and to reconduct him to the entrance of the grotto*.

Francis, who had already sacrificed his first queen to his irregular pleasures, experienced in turn the fatal effects of his indiscretion, and became, while yet in the vigour of life, a martyr to the most cruel of all diseases. He had been engaged in an amour with a woman, known in history by the name of "La belle Feroniere," whose rank and condition are somewhat uncertain. Her husband, conscious how dangerous it is to oppose the passions or desires of princes, pretended to submit to his own dishonour; but determined on revenge, and unable to devise any other expedient, he voluntarily contracted that distemper which had been recently brought from the New World into Europe, which he communicated to his unhappy wife, and she, unknowingly, to the king. It is pretended that the husband administered quick and effectual remedies to his complaint; but "La Fero-

* This story is incontestably authentic, and occurs in almost all the French historians, though many circumstances of it are here omitted as being too minute. The remains of a boat, said to be that of Francis the first, were to be seen some few years since, in the cavern through which lies the passage to the lake. The "Sept merveilles de Dauphiné," are well known, and are yet visited by the curious.

niere"

"niere" survived it only a short time. Even 1538.
Francis, whether from unskilful treatment in his physicians, or neglect, or ignorance, never perfectly recovered this singular punishment. He underwent extreme pain from its effects; and, after dragging on seven or eight years of life, under a continual return of symptoms more and more alarming, expired in the vigour of his age*.

But though such were the pernicious effects of his irregular pleasures to himself, yet were they productive of many immediate public benefits to his subjects and the kingdom. Pain and mental anxiety preying constantly upon him, gradually changed his disposition. No longer capable of pursuing, as formerly, his appetites without restraint, and compelled to a life more temperate

* Every writer of Francis's reign relates this extraordinary anecdote; and it is found, though with some difference in minute particulars, in Mezerai, Varillas, Le Calendrier du Pere L'Enfant, Louis Guyon, Buffieres, Bayle, and many others.—The portrait of "La belle Feroniere" is yet to be seen in cabinets, and forms one of the beauties in the famous collection of Odieuvre. The most common opinion is, that her husband was a lawyer; but that is not certain. Louis Guyon is more diffuse in his relation of the circumstances of this story than any other author. Francis was, during near a month, so ill at Compiègne, that his life was thought to be in extreme danger, and was even despaired of many times.—Dr. Burnet relates a story of James the second, when duke of York, similar in many respects to that of Francis and "La belle Feroniere."

1538. and prudent, he renounced his profusion, and became sparing of the revenues. Favourites, who used to abuse his bounty, lost their command over him: he applied more seriously to the great business of state; and, becoming splenetic, inaccessible, and reserved, introduced order through all the departments of government.

1539. The rebellion of the inhabitants of Ghent, which took place at this time, served to oppose, in the most striking point of view, the different genius and character of Charles and Francis. So far was the latter prince from taking advantage of their insurrection, and of their offers of submission to him, that he even gave information of their intention to the emperor; and granted him a passage through his dominions, without laying him, as he might have done, under any conditions, except those of gratitude and honour. Every attention and respect was even shewn him, which could have been expected from the most disinterested friendship. The Dauphin and the duke of Orleans, accompanied by the Constable Montmorenci, went to receive the emperor at Bayonne, and even offered to go as hostages into Spain for the security of his person. The king himself, though exceedingly indisposed by illness, advanced as far as Chattelleraud in Poictou, where he received his imperial majesty with every mark of esteem and amity. Honours more than regal were paid to him, while all orders of

the state vied in their endeavours to welcome his arrival, and to heighten the splendor of his progress through the provinces, and his entry into the capital *.

It was proposed in the cabinet, to improve the opportunity, and to compel the emperor by force, if it could not be done otherwise, to the restitution of the Milanese; a condition which he had engaged himself by a verbal promise to fulfil, previous to his entry into the kingdom. Montmorenci alone declared against the general opinion; and, whether influenced by

* When the Constable de Montmorenci presented the two sons of France to the emperor, he besought of his majesty to accept them as hostages for his personal safety; but Charles, who knew how and when to affect a magnanimity to which he was in reality a stranger, answered, that "he would indeed accept of them, not as hostages to be sent into Spain, but to retain them near his person, and to be the companions of his journey." The most sumptuous entertainments were given by Francis to his guest at Chatelleraud, at Amboise, Blois, Orleans, and Fontainebleau; but all these were eclipsed by the magnificence of his entry into Paris. Charles, during his stay in France, exercised every act of sovereignty, and liberated the prisoners in all the places through which he passed. Yet, amid all the endeavours exerted to amuse and entertain him, the emperor was visibly uneasy and suspicious. He staid only eight days in Paris; at Chantilly he likewise stopped a few days, and was there received by the Constable with a splendor little short of royal. Montmorenci and the two princes, sons of Francis, did not leave Charles till he reached his own dominions, at Valenciennes.

1539. Charles, who flattered and careſſed him to the greateſt degree, whether he was induced to give this counſel from adherence to the queen Eleanor of Auſtria, or from any motives yet more uncertain and concealed, he eaſily prevailed on Francis to lay his gueſt under no reſtriction *. The king even conducted himſelf towards the emperor with an unexampled delicacy, accompanied him on his departure as far as St. Quintin, and ſent his two ſons to attend him to Valenciennes. Theſe accumulated favours were repaid with the meaneſt breach of faith, and the loweſt evaſions. Charles, who never meant to reſign the

* It may be much queſtioned whether Montmorenci's advice was not equally wiſe, as it certainly was liberal and magnanimous. Du Bellai, in his Memoirs, juſtifies the Conſtable for his opinion. He places it, however, anterior in point of time to Charles's arrival in France; and preſiſely at that juncture when the propoſal was firſt made to Francis by the emperor, to allow him a paſſage through the French dominions. The cardinal de Tournon, and the other members of the council, were of opinion to demand a written and ſolemn promiſe from Charles, to give the inveſtiture of the Milaneſe to the young duke of Orleans. Montmorenci thought any ſuch engagement equally nugatory, and as eaſily violated as a verbal promiſe, if the emperor was determined not to adhere to his word. In effect, can it be doubted that he never ſeriously intended to relinquish that beautiful and fertile duchy? and would he have been more ſcrupulous in fulfilling his engagement, however ſolemnly ratified, than Francis had ſhewn himſelf in complying with the treaty of Madrid, and the ceſſion of Burgundy?

rich

rich duchy of Milan, and only sought to deceive his rival, avowed his intention when he no longer feared reprisals; and, like his grandfather Ferdinand, did not blush at a successful perfidy *.

The indignation and shame which the king felt at being thus made the dupe of his own unsuspecting honour, roused him from that reliance on the counsel of others, which he had hitherto in many instances too frequently indulged. He suspected that treachery in his own servants, had been added to the emperor's duplicity, and that they had

1539.

1539,

and

1540.

* There is a curious anecdote on the subject of Charles's passage through France in Dupleix, who attributes the facility of his departure and escape almost entirely to the influence of the duchess d'Estampes.—Francis, says he, when he presented his mistress to the emperor, said, “*Mon frere, cette belle dame me conseille de vous obliger à détruire à Paris l'ouvrage de Madrid;*” to which he coldly replied, “*Si le conseil en est bon, il faut le suivre.*” Alarmed however at this intimation of the duchess's sentiments, and knowing her power over the king, Charles determined to exert all his address to attach her to his interests. On the ensuing day, when water was offered him to wash, Madame d'Estampes held the napkin. In pulling off a diamond of prodigious value which he wore on his finger, he purposely let it drop; and she having taken it up, Charles refused to accept it, adding gallantly, that it too well became the hand where fortune had placed it, to take it away. The duchess, adds Dupleix, was too grateful for the present.—There is an air of fiction and romance spread over this story, nor can it be much relied on; though it is but too clear that she held intelligence with Charles, in the sequel.

1539. jointly imposed on his understanding. As he carried his inspection deeper, he thought he discovered new proofs of the pernicious abuse which his favourites had made of the royal ear and affection. The allurements of pleasure had ceased to delude his judgment; while the cares and duties of a great monarch, anxious for the public good, began to occupy his mind, and the virtues which nature had early planted there, but whose growth had been retarded by a too early accession to the crown, rekindled in an age less susceptible of flattery.

This alteration in the king's disposition, was followed by almost a total change of his conduct. The persons to whom the first offices in the several departments of the state had been confided, were all disgraced. Brion, admiral of France, was degraded from that station; and though the intercession of the duchess d'Estampes, to whom he was allied by blood, softened the severity of his prosecution and sentence, yet he died the victim of his mortified pride, and humbled fortunes*. Poyet, the chancellor, was the second sacrifice; and his punishment, more rigorous, reduced

* The ostensible pretexts for the trial and disgrace of the admiral Brion, were certainly not the real causes of that event; nor can Francis, on any supposition, be justified in having degraded and dishonoured a nobleman, whose conduct and services had merited a different treatment. Brion possessed many qualities, which rendered him deservedly dear

reduced him to penury and extreme distress. His conduct while he held the seals, which was no less reproachable than that of Du Prat, his predecessor, even deprived him in this wretched condition, of the popular commiseration. These two conspicuous changes in the administration only served to prepare the way to a yet greater fall—that

1541.

to his sovereign and to the nation; nor could all the malice of his numerous enemies, assisted by the virulence of Poyet the chancellor, criminate him, or stain his character with any imputation of guilt. The concealed reason for his persecution was, unquestionably, the attachment which Francis's mistress, the duchess d'Estampes had betrayed for Brion, and which the king could ill pardon. Jealousy and rivalry conducted to the admiral's destruction, more than any reasons of policy, or crimes of state. Brion, throughout his whole trial, and even after the unjust sentence of condemnation passed upon him, sustained his courage, and denied his having committed any act of felony towards his sovereign. Francis caused him to be arrested, and conducted to the castle of Melun. He was sentenced to a fine of fifteen hundred thousand livres, and to perpetual banishment. The king was, however, too sensible of the iniquity of this decision, not to revoke it instantly. On the 12th of March, 1542, by letters patent, all the pains and penalties of the sentence were rescinded and done away; Brion was restored in honour, and perpetual silence imposed on his accusers. But the blow was already struck: the admiral, wounded in his reputation, and disgraced by his sovereign, survived it only a short time, and died on the 1st of June, 1543. Francis made a magnificent funeral for him, and erected a splendid monument to his memory, as some, though a late and ineffectual testimony of his fidelity and services.

1541. of the Constable, so long unrivalled in Francis's affection and esteem. The cause of it cannot be exactly ascertained, nor is it positively known whether it proceeded more from political, or from personal motives. It is said, that the king was jealous of the Dauphin's growing attachment to him, and that this operated, together with the other reasons before mentioned, to produce his dismissal. Montmorenci retired from court, and amused himself in building the castle of Ecoëen, near St. Denis, during his exile; nor could the king ever be persuaded to recal or employ him, by any entreaties or endeavours used for that purpose*. The Cardinal de Tournon, a man of no superior

* It cannot be questioned that the partiality of the Dauphin Henry, and the open marks of respect and affection which he shewed to Montmorenci, contributed towards, if they did not absolutely produce his dismissal. Diana de Poitiers, mistress to the Dauphin, and the declared rival of the duchess d'Estampes, had attached Montmorenci to her interests: he even contracted a very close alliance with her, by marrying, his second son Henry, to Antoinette de la Marck, Diana's grand-daughter. The court began to be divided between the two contending factions of the king and his eldest son; nor could Francis view without jealousy and resentment, the Constable's close connexion with the Dauphin. Yet, even in disgracing him, Francis treated him more as a favourite dismissed, than as a minister culpable towards the state. Montmorenci retired with dignity to his castle at Chantilly, unpursued and unpersecuted by the royal displeasure. Notwithstanding the many defects and vices of his

rior talents, but of application, and a capacity for business, was invested with the highest employment of the state; and the Marechal d'Annebaut, who succeeded Brion as admiral, divided with him the royal confidence.

1541.

After near two years of intrigue, negotiation, and insidious proposals on the part of the emperor, relative to the pretended resignation of the Milanese in favour of Charles duke of Orleans; Francis, convinced that these measures would never produce the end intended, and irritated by the Marquis del Guasto's assassination of Rincon and Fregose, his ambassadors to the republic of Venice, and to the Sultan Solyman, openly took up arms, and renewed hostilities *.

1542.

He even made efforts

his character, he certainly possessed very sublime qualities. The finances, and the interior police of the kingdom, both which had been under his superintendence, felt his loss, and had never been so well administered as by him since the accession of Francis to the throne. Even the severity and rigour of his character formed a barrier to the profusion of those who occupied the inferior departments of government, and who trembled at his inexorable and vigilant circumspection. Perhaps, on a candid estimate of his virtues and defects, the kingdom may be said to have suffered in many points, by his dismissal and removal.

* The assassination of the two ambassadors of Francis the first (which though executed by the immediate orders of the Marquis del Guasto, governor of the Milanese, was yet unquestionably permitted, if not commanded, by Charles the fifth) is one of the foulest transactions which disgrace the annals

1542. efforts more extraordinary than any yet exerted during his whole reign. Henry, the Dauphin, was placed

nals of those times, and from which it is impossible to clear the emperor's memory. Cæsar Fregose, a noble Genoese, was nominated by Francis his ambassador to the republic of Venice; as was Antoine Rincon, a gentleman of the king's bedchamber, to the court of Constantinople. Rincon being a man of excessive corpulency, and unable to support the fatigue of a journey on horseback across all Piedmont and the Milanese, they determined to embark on the Po. Langei, then commander of the French forces in Piedmont, having, by his vigilant exertions, received information that the Marquis del Guasto had stationed various bands of assassins along the course of the Po, and the other principal rivers of Lombardy, informed the two ambassadors of their danger, and entreated them to desist from the prosecution of their intended journey by water. Rincon was shaken by Langei's remonstrances; but Fregose adhering to his first resolution, they proceeded on their expedition. Langei, having received fresh information of the design to assassinate them, dispatched a messenger to desire them to return. They refused, whether from a sense of shame, or from incredulity; but they consented to send back their credentials and dispatches, which the French commander engaged to deliver to them safely at Venice. The two ambassadors continuing their voyage, and to make more expedition having rowed all night, passed Casal, and next day reached Cantaloue, at a small distance from the place where the Tesino falls into the Po. They already began to deride the apprehensions of Langei, and to conclude themselves in safety, when they were suddenly attacked by two boats full of armed men. Rincon and Fregose were instantly massacred, sword in hand, after a brave defence against superior numbers. All their attendants and rowers, as well

placed at the head of an army in the province of Roussillon, and laid siege to Perpignan, the capital, from whence, however, he was obliged to retire without success. His brother Charles, after a much more prosperous campaign in Flanders, abandoned his triumphs in the midway; and desirous to engage the emperor, who was expected to come in person to the relief of Perpignan, he quitted his troops, and precipitately crossed all France to the city of Montpellier, where his father had remained, to wait the event of the siege. Scarce any advantageous consequences resulted to the kingdom, from these great and expensive armaments.

as the rowers of the two boats which contained the assassins, were indiscriminately committed, by order of the Marquis del Guasto, to the castle of Pavia, and confined in a dungeon. A second boat, which followed that of the two unfortunate ambassadors, and in which were the principal part of their domestics, escaped to the bank of the river, and eluded the pursuit of the assassins. Del Guasto was no sooner apprized of the success of his design, than he affected the utmost horror at so atrocious a crime, and pretended to set on foot the most rigorous enquiry after its perpetrators. But Langei having corrupted a servant of the governor of the castle of Pavia, he contrived to file away the bars of the prison in which the boatmen were confined, and having liberated them, conducted them in safety to Turin. This incontestible evidence being obtained of the Marquis del Guasto's guilt and participation, Francis filled the diet of the empire, and every court of Europe, with too just complaints and accusations of the emperor's violation of all the laws of nations.

Francis

1543.

March,

Francis gave at this time an instance of the utmost clemency, in his treatment of the inhabitants of La Rochelle, who had revolted. After having entered with a great military train into the city, which was incapable of defence, he first pointed out to them in an eloquent address, the enormity of their crime, and then pardoned it in the amplest manner.

Meanwhile the king of England had once more come to an open rupture with Francis, and renewed his ancient alliance with the emperor. The Netherlands became again the scene of hostilities; and, though Francis's illness made it highly inconvenient to him, yet he was obliged to command his forces in person. He took, and garrisoned Luxembourg; but the inequality was too great against two such formidable enemies as Henry and Charles, to allow him to achieve any other conquest of importance.

Induced by the pressing solicitations of the king of France, Solyman the magnificent, emperor of the Turks, dispatched the renowned pirate Barbarossa, as his admiral, with a hundred and thirty gallies, to the aid of Francis; Barbarossa, in conjunction with the French fleet, commanded by the young Count d'Enguien, laid siege to Nice, but raised it again dishonourably; and Francis, reproached by all the christian princes for this union with their common enemy, derived from it scarce
any

any adequate, or proportionate benefit. In Flanders he was more successful: Charles, who had led a formidable army into the field, was repulsed before the town of Landrecy, by the valour of the garrison; and after seizing on Cambray, an imperial city, he quickly retired into winter quarters.

After having been married ten years without issue, Catherine of Medicis was at length delivered of a son, who was named Francis, and who afterwards ascended the throne. Her character had not yet unveiled itself; repressed and concealed by the genius of Francis, and the circumstances of the times. She possessed no political influence, nor had she any seat in the cabinet. Her sterility contributed to diminish her consequence, and even gave rise to some proposals for a dissolution of the marriage between her and the Dauphin, but which were relinquished. Even in this depressed situation, her address was visible; she made the most assiduous and successful court to the king, whose health began to decline; she accompanied him to the chace; formed one of that celebrated party, known by the title of "La petite bande de dames de la cour;" and attended him on his private excursions to the palaces of Chambord, Fontainebleau, and St. Germain, where he laid aside the cares of state, and unbent himself in the company of a select number of his favourites. These complaisant and winning attentions rendered

1543.

rendered her infinitely dear to Francis *. To her husband, the Dauphin, she was no less submissive; he was already devoted to his mistress, Diana de Poitiers, whose faction, opposed to that of the Duchess d'Estampes, divided the court. In this most delicate and critical condition, Catherine yet rendered herself acceptable to all parties by a humility and flexibility of conduct rarely found; and, reserving the talents with which she was endowed for more favourable times, she was content to remain at present in a degree of obscurity.

1544.

The war between the two monarchs was meanwhile continued with redoubled violence. Francis had entrusted the chief command of his forces in Piedmont to the Count d'Enguien. This young hero, though only twenty-one years of age, had already raised the highest expectations: in him revived the genius of Gaston de Foix; and, like

* Though certain authors have spoken of the "Petite bande de dames de la cour," as a most dissolute and voluptuous association, yet there can be no doubt of the falsehood of such an accusation. It is likewise said, that Catherine prevented a divorce between Henry and herself, by the interest of Diana de Poitiers, his mistress, of which she did not scruple to avail herself; but this story is very problematical, and much to be disputed. Uniform tradition, and several contemporary writers, attribute to Fernel, the king's first physician, the merit of having rendered her capable of bearing children, by some medical assistance given to her constitution; and there seems every reason to believe this fact.

that

that illustrious warrior, his glories and his exploits were soon extinguished. Brother to Anthony duke of Vendome, and to Louis prince of Condé, so renowned afterwards in the unhappy wars of Charles the ninth, his rank entitled him to the highest employments, and his capacity made him worthy of the supreme command. The battle of Cerizoles, which he gained over the Marquis del Guaſto, who was wounded in the action and fled, renewed the remembrance of the glorious day of Ravenna; and the conquest of the Milanese would have been the inevitable consequence of this important victory, if the king had not been compelled to renounce his Italian conquests, from the pressing exigency of his domestic affairs *. Charles the fifth and Henry the

1544.

13th April.

* The celebrated Marechal de Montluc, who has left us his Commentaries, and who served at this time under the Count d'Enguien in Piedmont, was dispatched by him to the court to represent the situation of affairs, and to demand the king's permission to give battle to the imperial general. Montluc has given us a very interesting recital of the particulars of his examination before the council, at which Francis assisted in person. He was permitted to speak, from the anxiety and impatience which he betrayed in his countenance and gestures, while the great question of bringing the enemy to a decisive action was agitated in the council. The enthusiasm and warmth with which Montluc described the certainty of victory, induced the king, who easily caught the flame, to decide in favour of the Count d'Enguien's request.

1544. the eighth, entering Picardy with two prodigious armies, menaced France with greater calamities than any she had even yet experienced.

quest. The ministers were divided in opinion ; d'Annebaut inclining to join with Francis, and the Count de St. Pol opposing Montluc. The king, at length, terminated the deliberation, and lifting his hands to heaven, cried out, " Qu'ils combattent ! qu'ils combattent !" This resolution was consonant to the genius and character of Francis, always easily inflamed with adventurous and daring counsels. Montluc instantly set off to carry the welcome intelligence to the army in Italy. The left wing of the French, composed principally of Swiss and Italian troops, behaved shamefully, and fled at the first shock of the Spanish and German infantry. The Count d'Enguien, who commanded in person this wing, after making efforts of frantic valour to rally his flying troops, and after repeatedly charging the enemy at the head of a body of cavalry, conceived that all was lost, and only sought in despair an honourable death in the thickest ranks of the imperial landsknechts. But, at that precise juncture, the centre and the right wing of the French having been victorious, attacked the Spanish infantry with so much impetuosity in their flank and rear, that they gave way, and retreated into the woods, where they were pursued and cut to pieces. An undisputed victory remained to the Count d'Enguien. The prince of Salerno, who commanded a considerable body of soldiers, might still have restored and changed the fortune of the day ; but the Marquis del Guasto, having forgot to revoke the order which he had given to the prince of Salerno previous to the battle, to remain fixed and motionless, the favourable moment was lost. A prodigious carnage was made among the Spaniards by the conquerors. The Marquis del Guasto neither sustained in this action his reputation for conduct, or even for personal courage.

Had

Had the junction between the forces of these powerful invaders been made, which was originally stipulated, the kingdom would probably have been reduced to the verge of ruin; but the emperor's error in laying siege to the town of St. Disier, which detained him more than six weeks, superadded to the king of England's refusal to join him, or to desist from his attempt on Boulogne, gave Francis time to provide for the safety of his capital and his dominions. He was himself too much weakened by his disorder to permit him to command the army in person, which was therefore intrusted to the Dauphin. The emperor advancing, spread universal terror and consternation, while Paris, abandoned by its inhabitants, presented a scene of the utmost distress. Scarce could the king's arrival calm their alarms, or restore any sort of tranquillity among the affrighted citizens.

Meanwhile his son Henry, active, warlike, and animated with enthusiasm in so great a cause, had reduced Charles, in his turn, to the greatest difficulties for want of forage and provisions. It is even probable that the emperor must have sued for a cessation of arms, or made a difficult and shameful retreat into the Low Countries, if the intrigues of the Duchess d'Estampes had not extricated him from this perilous situation, by giving him private information of the magazines which were provided at Epernay and Chateau

1544.

Thierry, of which Charles instantly possessed himself. The motive to this infamous and treasonable conduct in the king's mistress, was her jealousy of the Dauphin's glory, and her partiality for the duke of Orleans his brother, to whom she imagined Charles would resign the Milanese, and under whose protection she flattered herself with the hopes of a secure asylum after the death of Francis, which she regarded as approaching. Though this assistance prevented the emperor's troops from being destroyed by famine, and though, by a subsequent act of perfidy St. Disier fell into his hands, yet the fortune of the campaign still continued in suspense: and Henry, wishing to signalize his prowess, and shew himself worthy of the crown he was destined to inherit, might still have snatched from his enemy the trophies he had so recently acquired. These considerations prevailed on the emperor either to propose, or to accept the offers made him for the final settlement of peace. Two Dominican friars, named Diegos Chiavez, and Gabriel de Gusman, conducted the negotiation, which was warmly seconded by Eleanor, Francis's queen. The Dauphin, on the other hand, violently opposed the treaty as inglorious and unnecessary; and as making a sacrifice of the national honour to the elevation of his brother, the only object which the contrary faction had in view. The king, after some hesitation and irresolution, embraced the

the interests of his youngest son, for whom he indulged a partial fondness.—The treaty, which finally took place at Crespy, was in consequence less calculated for the public and national benefit, than for the particular advantage of the duke of Orleans, to whom the emperor promised either his daughter or his niece in marriage, with the Low Countries or the Milanese in dowry, to be accomplished within two years. A contingent and future benefit, in return for which Francis resigned almost all his conquests in Savoy or Piedmont; and which agreement, it is probable Charles never intended to perform. Henry the Dauphin protested publicly against this treaty, so injurious to his interests, and to those of France *.

1544.

18th September.

December.

The

* There can remain no doubt of the treasonable information repeatedly given by the Duchefs d'Estampes to the emperor; and without which he could neither have taken St. Disier, nor possessed himself of the magazines at Epernay and Chateau Thierry, which were absolutely indispensable for the preservation of his forces. The Count de Longueval was employed by the Duchefs to deceive Sancerre, who commanded in St. Disier, and who surrendered the place by capitulation, upon a false order of the duke of Guise, fabricated by the cardinal Granvelle, the emperor's minister, to whom Madame d'Estampes had transmitted the duke of Guise's cypher.

Francis, who was ignorant and unsuspicious of the hand from whence proceeded this fatal blow, was almost overcome at the news: he was so indisposed by illness at that time, as

1545.

The capture of Boulogne, which had fallen into the king of England's hands, by the mis-

to be obliged to keep his chamber; but the rapid advance of Charles towards Paris, and the loss of his two great magazines upon the river Marne, compelled him, exhausted as he was in body and mind, to ride through the streets of his capital, accompanied by the duke of Guise, and to exert every effort to reassure, and to stop the flight of the terrified inhabitants. The Dauphin Henry, by a bold and masterly movement, threw himself between the imperial army and Paris; and the emperor, who had not foreseen or expected so rapid a manœuvre, was compelled to fall back to Soissons. In this situation, peace became hourly more desirable. His magazines, though ample, would have been soon exhausted; and the gout, with which he was attacked, disposed him to quit the hazards and fatigues of a precarious campaign. Though the only object of Francis's attention in this peace was the aggrandisement of the duke of Orleans, to which all the interests of the monarchy were sacrificed, yet there can be very little doubt that Charles the fifth never seriously intended to relinquish the Milanese. The conditions on which the cession of that duchy were eventually to depend, appear to have been studiously ambiguous, equivocal, and undefined. It was to be delayed eight months, which time was left to the emperor, to decide whether he chose to give his eldest daughter Mary in marriage to the duke of Orleans, or his niece Anne, second daughter of his brother Ferdinand, king of the Romans. If the first of these alliances took place, he was to cede the Netherlands to his son-in-law; if the latter, the Milanese. On the whole face of the treaty, it seems evident that Charles only intended to deceive the king of France, and to profit of the credulity of that monarch and his mistress, on the favourite article of the duchy of Milan; to the acquisition of which, Francis made almost all the measures of his reign uniformly subservient.

conduct

1545.

conduct and cowardice of Vervin who commanded in the place, had served to hasten the conclusion of this pacification; and Francis, anxious for the recovery of so important a frontier city, not only sent his eldest son Henry to form the siege of it, but advanced in person, accompanied by his youngest son Charles, to the abbey of Foret-Moustier, which is about ten leagues distant from Boulogne, between Abbeville and Montreuil. Here he was again overwhelmed by a new affliction, to which he was deeply sensible; the death of the duke of Orleans. This prince was the unhappy victim of his own puerile temerity and want of prudence. The plague had appeared in the neighbourhood of the village where the king was lodged; and his son, notwithstanding the entreaties and remonstrances of his attendants, persisted to sleep in a house said to be infected; asserting gaily that "in the annals of the monarchy, there was no instance of a son of France who had died of the plague." He even carried his fatal indiscretion to a yet more extraordinary length; and having pulled out the bedding said to be tainted, ran up and down covered with the feathers. He was seized almost immediately with the distemper, and died in a few days in his father's arms, who sunk under the blow, and was overwhelmed with grief at the loss of this favourite child, for whom he had with so much

9th September.

1545. care endeavoured to provide a rich inheritance*.

The duke of Orleans, who was only twenty-three years old at the time of his death, resembled

* Charles, duke of Orleans, was born in January, 1522. In his person he was handsome; but, if we may judge from some verses of Marot, there was a degree of effeminacy in his manner, not usually characteristic of that age. He was brave even to temerity, and delighted in all the martial diversions of the court. It may be questioned whether the distemper of which he died was the plague, or only a malignant fever, then epidemic, and which had made great ravages in Picardy. Many minute and curious particulars of his illness are enumerated in a letter written from Amiens by the papal nuncio to the presidents of the council of Trente, dated the 18th of September, 1545, a few days after his decease. The young Prince arrived in the camp on the 4th September, and having heard that the plague had appeared in many parts of the country, he determined to shew his contempt of the disorder, by entering several houses said to be infected. He afterwards, when heated by exercise, drank a glass of cold water, and having gone to bed, was seized in two hours with a shivering and head-ach: he instantly cried out, "It is the plague! I shall die of it." The remedies which were administered, appeared however, to produce a beneficial effect, and on the 9th he was thought to be out of danger; but on that very day a more violent return of the fever seized him: he then demanded the viaticum, prepared himself for his end, and anxiously desired to see the king his father. Francis, notwithstanding all the remonstrances of his attendants, hastened to his son, who no sooner saw him enter, than he exclaimed, "I am dying; but since I see your majesty, I die content." The prince expired almost at the same instant in the arms of his disconsolate parent, a victim to his own rashness and fatal imprudence.

Francis

Francis in person more than either of his elder sons, and was the handsomest of his three children. He had no bodily defect, except a slight injury in one of his eyes, caused by the small-pox; but even this blemish was not discernible. As the features of his face bore a peculiar similarity to those of his father, so did the leading strokes of his character. He was lively, animated, courageous, active, and incapable of disguise or reserve; but marked with those errors and foibles which commonly characterize youth; presumption, warmth, and vanity. He was doubtless a prince of high expectations, if the rivalry and avowed animosity between him and the Dauphin had not rendered it too probable that after Francis's death, the brothers would no longer have preserved any measures with each other. The emperor artfully fomented this jealousy between them, and by affecting a predilection and preference for the Duke of Orleans, instilled deeper suspicions into Henry's bosom; so that perhaps his untimely end was not injurious to the state, however severely the loss was felt by his father.—Charles immediately declared, that by this accident he held himself acquitted from all his agreements relative to the Milanese, and refused to make the promised resignation of that duchy.

The death of Francis, Count d'Enguien, who had so lately acquired an immortal reputation in Italy by the victory at Cerizoles, and whose age was almost exactly the same with that of the

1545.

1546.

1546. prince deceased, renewed the king's grief, who lamented his loss with the deepest sorrow. There is an ambiguity spread over this sad event which it is difficult to penetrate. The Count was engaged at play with other young noblemen of the court at La Roche-sur-Yonne, when he received a blow from a chest, thrown purposely, as is asserted, from a window on his head, of which he languished a few days, and died. Cornelio Bentivoglio, an Italian nobleman, with whom he before had some dispute, was accused of this detestable action; but the king would not permit the affair to be minutely examined, from the apprehension, as is pretended, of finding that the Duke of Guise, and even the Dauphin himself, were implicated in, or privy to the commission of this crime *.

A peace,

* However suspicious many of the circumstances attendant on the Count d'Enguien's death may appear, yet it is impossible to admit the pretended participation of the duke of Guise or the Dauphin in so base an act, without authentic testimony. There is nothing in the life or reign of Henry the second, which indicates a mind so lost to honour, and so destitute of humanity: on the contrary, he was an amiable and generous prince, nor are the annals of his reign stained with any assassinations committed by his order or permission. Even Francis, duke of Guise, however ambitious, violent, and even sanguinary in his zeal, yet was an open and avowed enemy, not a mean assassin. Francis the first unquestionably suspended and prevented all judicial inquiry into the circumstances of the Count d'Enguien's death; but he acted exactly

A peace, long wished for by the two kings of France and England, at length took place, by which Henry engaged to restore Boulogne in eight years, on condition of being paid a certain annual sum of money; and Francis, released from this object of his care, bent all his attention towards the German empire, where Charles the fifth had openly attempted to establish an unlimited power.

1546.
8th June.

As the king approached towards the close of his life, the violence of the two parties which exactly in the same manner, when in the year 1521, he himself had been so severely wounded in the head by a torch at Romorentin. He never would permit of any endeavours to discover the hand from whence it was thrown, consulting only in that conduct his own magnanimity and liberality of mind.

The circumstances of these two disasters at Romorentin, and at La Roche-sur-Yonne, have a remarkable similarity to each other. All the amusements of that age were martial and military. The Count d'Enguien sustained a siege in a house which the Dauphin and his train attacked, and snow-balls were the weapons used; but the Count having made a sally on the assailants, a chest thrown from a window fell on his head, and caused his death. It is not even well ascertained that Bentivoglio threw this chest; but he was suspected and accused of having done it, as Montecuculi had been of poisoning the Dauphin Francis, in 1536. All murders, and flagitious crimes were imputed to Italians in the sixteenth century; and in the art of preparing poisons, they were regarded as adepts. Whether the death of the Count d'Enguien was the effect of design or of accident, his loss was deeply to be lamented by all France, as a prince of the highest endowments and greatest expectations.

divided

1546. divided the court, redoubled. The duchess d'Estampes had endeavoured to spread a report, that Diana de Poitiers was the cause of the duke of Orleans's death, by having given him poison. To this cruel imputation, she had added many contemptuous expressions on the decay of her rival's personal charms; and openly declared, that the year of Diana's marriage was that of her own birth. The Dauphin, in revenge for these aspersions on his mistress, had indulged himself in some very severe and pointed farcasms on the duchess's fidelity. He even presumed to assert, that she consoled herself for his father's sickness in the arms of another; and he named the celebrated Guy Chabot, Seigneur de Jarnac, as the person, though nearly allied to her, having married her sister. This accusation reached the king's ear, who highly resented it, and would have rigorously punished the author, had not his name been concealed. Jarnac denied the fact, which La Chataigneraie, a favourite of the Dauphin, protested he had communicated to him; and from this source originated the famous duel between those two noblemen, which took place on Henry the second's accession*.

We

* It was not only with Jarnac, that Madame d'Estampes has been accused of infidelity. The Count de Bossu, and the Seigneur de Dampierre, have been likewise named as her lovers; but none of these accusations are proved, and probably

We draw towards the close of this interesting reign. The death of Henry the eighth of England alarmed and disquieted the king, who had long known and personally loved that prince. Some distant degree of analogy and resemblance in their characters, had even united them closely to each other, notwithstanding their frequent wars and contending interests. Francis caused a requiem and service to be said for the repose of Henry's soul, though he died excommunicated, and without the pale of the Romish church. He was deeply affected by it, and considered it as a prognostic of his own approaching dissolution. No effectual remedies could be administered to his disease, which was grown inveterate; and the uneasiness and anxiety of his mind encreased its

1547.

January.

bably they only originated in the Dauphin and his mistress's hatred. Even Brantome, partial to his uncle La Chataigneraie, merely insinuates, that the duchess was not strictly faithful to Francis, as he, on his part, did not pique himself on his fidelity to her. It was not her personal, but political conduct, which rendered her obnoxious to Henry the second, who, after his father's death, protested against the abuse which she had made of her influence over him, and publicly countenanced the prosecution against her.—There have been authors so absurd as to pretend, that Francis never had any other connections with her than those of mind, during two-and-twenty years; but it would be ridiculous to attempt formally to disprove this assertion. The complexion of the king, the beauty, and many attractions of the duchess, refute it sufficiently.

virulence.

1547. virulence. In this condition, he wandered from one palace to another, languid and depressed. A
 March. slow fever, produced by corporal and intellectual pain, began to waste his exhausted constitution; and at length, becoming more violent and continued, forced him to stop at the little palace of Rambouillet. Here, finding himself worse, and renouncing all hopes of life, he sent for his son Henry, that he might address to him his dying words. They were worthy of a great king, expiring.—Francis admonished him, that children should imitate the virtues, and not the vices of their parents; that the French people, as the most loyal and liberal of any nation in the world, merited in return to be protected, not oppressed by their sovereigns. He recommended to him, in terms the most forcible and persuasive, the diminution of the imposts and taxes, which continual wars had forced him to encrease to an unprecedented heighth. He requested him never to recall Montmorenci, to repress the dangerous and aspiring ambition of the house of Guise, and to continue the Cardinal of Tournon, and the Marechal d'Annebaut in the ministry, as virtuous and disinterested statesmen. Henry shewed little deference to these counsels, when he ascended the throne. Francis did not survive much longer; the perfect possession of his understanding and speech accompanied him, however, to the last moment; and he expired

31st
 March.

pired at length, aged only fifty-two years, of which he had reigned above thirty-two. The magnificence which had distinguished him through life, did not forsake him even in death; his funeral obsequies were performed with unusual pomp, and attended by eleven cardinals; a circumstance unexampled in the annals of France *!

I have been insensibly drawn into too minute a narration of Francis's reign, to render it necessary to be equally diffuse in the delineation of his character;

* Francis's bodily complaints and dejection of mind redoubled and augmented after he had received the afflicting news of the death of Henry the eighth. A slow fever attacked him in the beginning of February, which he endeavoured to surmount and expel by exercise, peculiarly by his favourite diversion of hunting; but in the evenings his fever returned, and his strength gradually diminished. He removed from St. Germain, to La Muette; from thence successively to Villepreux, Dampierre, and Limours. At this last place he intended to pass the carnival; but, after a short stay of only two or three days, he quitted it, and went to Loches, in Touraine. His complaints becoming there more violent, induced him to return to the palace of St. Germain, which was his most usual residence, and where he could receive the best medical assistance. In his way from Loches, he passed by Rambouillet, where he only purposed to remain one night, but he was destined there to finish his career.

The amusement which he found in hunting at Rambouillet, made him imagine that the residence would be favourable to his recovery; and in that flattering hope he determined to remain there: But the more alarming attacks of his fever, which were caused by the excessive pain he underwent from his

1547. — racter ; and indeed, such are the principal strokes of it, that they cannot be mistaken. We shall love and admire his magnanimity, his clemency, his munificence, his romantic and scrupulous honour. We shall confess and respect his capacity, his courage, his protection of genius and the arts, his heroism and fortitude.—We shall pity, and hide beneath the veil of candour and humanity, his profusion, his want of application, his too great subserviency to ministers, favourites, and mistresses, who abused his confidence.—No prince of the age in which he lived, interests so deeply ; none was so much celebrated, or the subject of such universal panegyric. Though usually unsuccessful in his wars, he yet acquired more glory than did the emperor his competitor ; and Francis is more truly great after the defeat at Pavia, or when a captive in the castle of Madrid, than Charles, victorious, and imposing conditions on his prisoner. His bounty, his princely liberality, his condescending attentions to men distinguished by their superior merit or talents, acquired him a fame not inferior to that of Leo the tenth, and less ostentatious than that of Louis

his ulcer, soon convinced him that his end was not very remote. He died with perfect composure and self-possession, occupied during his last moments in the great duties and cares of a monarch, anxious for the welfare of his successor and his people. Francis was buried at St. Denis ; but his heart and his bowels were deposited at the convent of Hautes Bruyeres, in the diocese of Chartres.

the

the fourteenth. We all know that the celebrated painter, Leonardo-da-Vinci expired in his arms, from the effort he made in raising himself, when in the last stage of illness, to express his sense of the honour done him by the visit of so august a monarch.

1547.

No European court could vie with that of Francis in brilliancy or lustre, and he was himself the animating soul which diffused over it a radiance.—During the last ten years of his life, his character rises upon the view. Notwithstanding all the previous disorder in the finances, notwithstanding the numerous and splendid palaces he erected, the donations he made, the collections of paintings and other works of art which he purchased, the continual wars which he sustained; yet at his death the royal domain was unincumbered, there was a vast sum in the treasury, and a quarter of his revenues ready to enter the exchequer.—His very foibles and errors were such as mark a feeling and generous mind; such as we pardon while we censure. His promiscuous amours carried with them their own punishment, and conducted him untimely to the grave, before age had diminished his faculties or enfeebled his powers. To Henry the fourth he bears a striking resemblance; and this latter prince, so worthy of immortal praise, was flattered and charmed with the comparison of himself to Francis, whom he admired, and wished to imitate. The proclamation in the hall of the palace, which announced

1547. nounced his death, was couched in these words;
 — “ Prince clement en paix, victorieux en guerre,
 “ pere et restaurateur des bonnes lettres, et des
 “ arts liberaux.” An eulogium, which however
 great, was yet far unequal, in real worth, to that
 of “ Father of his people ;” conferred on his pre-
 decessor, Louis the twelfth !

By Eleanor of Austria, his second wife, he never had any issue ; and on his decease she retired first into the Netherlands, and afterwards into Spain ; in which country she died, at Talavera, near Badajox, eleven years after her husband. We know not that Francis had any children by either of his most celebrated mistresses, the Countess de Chateau-Briand, and the Duchess d’Estampes*.

* Brantome has mentioned a certain “ Villecouvin,” as his illegitimate son ; but this is very doubtful.—It is curious to find in the Jesuit Garasse, and in Sanderus, that Anne Boleyn, afterwards queen of England, is accused of having been one of Francis’s mistresses. They not only vilify her character by invectives the most illiberal, but describe her person in language so extraordinary, that I cannot help copying it from the latter of these writers. “ Anne de Boleyn
 “ avoit six doigts à la main droite ; le visage long, jaune,
 “ comme si elle eut eu les pales couleurs ; et une loupe sous
 “ la gorge.”—Is this the beautiful Anne Boleyn ? It is impossible at least to recognize her under these frightful and ridiculous colours.

END OF VOLUME FIRST.

